

THE KUPPUSWAMI SASTRI
RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
MADRAS.

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THE
DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE

1850

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DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE

Presented to

Prof. S. Kūppū Swami Sastri

R.D. Bhatta

7.12.26.

BY
RAMDAS BHATTACHARYYA, M. A.
HEAD MASTER, PURNEA ZILLAH SCHOOL

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PREFACE

*A Study of the Sacred Literature of
the South (or the Deccan).*

In the following pages an attempt has been made to give an idea of the result of the study of the sacred manuscripts in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Canarese, as well as on Sanscrit which embody the thoughts of the Saints and Sages who flourished in Southern India in the course of the last fifty Centuries and more; namely, Sri Saro-yogi, (श्रीसरोयोगो) Bhoot-yogi, (भूतयोगी) Mahar-yogi, (महर्योगी or भ्रान्तयोगी) Bhagti-Sara-Swami, (भक्तिमारस्वामी) Satha-kopa Swami, (शठकोपस्वामी) Kulasekhara Swami (कुलशेखरस्वामी) Vishnu Chitta (विष्णुचित्त) or Bhatta Nath Swami, (भट्टनाथस्वामी) Bhagtanghri Renu Swami, (भक्तांग्रिरेणुस्वामी) Yogi Vahana Swami (योगीवाहनस्वामी) Parakala Swami (परकालस्वामी) who are known as the ten, Alvárs (दशपास्वार); also, Mahá-purna Swami, (महापूर्णस्वामी) Yámunácháryya Swami (यामुनाचार्य स्वामी) Rám Misra Swami (राममिश्रस्वामी)* Pundarikaksha Swami; (पुण्डरीकाक्ष स्वामी) Kanchi Purna Swami; (कांचीपूर्ण स्वामी) Goshti Purna Swami, (गोष्ठीपूर्णस्वामी) Bhuri-Sri-Saila Purna Swami, (भूरिश्रीवैष्णवपूर्णस्वामी) Máládhara Swami, (मालाधरस्वामी) Vararanga Swami (वररंगस्वामी) and Nathmuni Swami (नाथमुनिस्वामी) who are known as the ten Parvá-cháryyas (दशपूर्वचार्य्य) including three others, namely

* Who flourished in the Deccan more than eleven centuries back.

Madhurkavi Alvar (मधुरकवि आल्वार) Srimati Godamba (श्रीमती गोदाम्बाजी) and Ramanuja Swami, (श्रीरामानुज स्वामी); Ramanuja Swami is counted both as an Alvar (आल्वार) as well as a Purvacharyya (पूर्वाचार्य). *Alvar* means the most advanced sage and "*Purvacharyya*" means the spiritual preceptors who preceded Ramanuja Swami. We then come to the followers of Ramanuja who are called the Paschadvarti Acharyyas (पश्चाद्वर्ती आचार्य) or the later spiritual preceptors. The ten Alvárs, the predecessors as well as the followers of Ramanuja, regard him as their Saviour. The ten Alvares and the ten Purvacharyyas acknowledge their kinship with Ramanuja by virtue of their priority and the followers and successors of Ramanuja regard themselves as being intimately connected with him by virtue of their succession. The two relations, priority and succession are the means of their salvation. Ramanuja is regarded as the ideal servant of the Lord, and, as such, the Saviour of all. His predecessors as well as his followers, therefore, claim salvation only by virtue of their relationship with him. He is thus the connecting link between his predecessors and followers. The former were connected with his head; for, he worshipped them and bowed down his head at their holy feet. The latter were connected with his holy feet; for, they were all his disciples and worshipped his holy feet. The relations of priority and succession when symbolically represented denote relationship with the head and the feet respectively. Either of the two relationships, therefore, brings about the salvation of man. Of the followers

of Ramanuja, the following may be mentioned namely Dasarathi Swami, (दाशरथि स्वामी) Koores Swami, (कूरेगस्वामी) Govindaryya Swami, (गोविन्दार्यस्वामी) Bhattaraka Swami, (भट्टारकस्वामी) Vedanti Swami (वेदान्तीस्वामी) Kalibairidas Swami, (कलिबेरिदास स्वामी) Sri Krishnapada Swami, (श्रीकृष्णपादस्वामी) Lokacharyya Swami, (लोकाचार्यस्वामी) Sri Sailes Swami, (श्रीशैलेशस्वामी) and Vara-Vara-muni Swami (वरवरमुनि स्वामी) or the second incarnation of Ramanuja Swami). Vara-Vara-muni Swami again had his followers, eight of whom head the list. These eight occupied the eight Chairs created by him for eight different purposes. Of them Vanadri Yogivaram (वाणाद्रियोगिवर) was entrusted with the duty of imparting instructions on the sacred subject of Vagabadvishaya (भगवत् विषय) and Badhula Varadaryya, (बाधूलवरदार्य्य) a lineal descendant of Ramanuja's nephew Dasarathi Swami, was ordered to make disciples. The third was Pratibadi Bhayankara (प्रतिवादी भयङ्कर) whose duty was to silence opponents. The remaining five were Venkatayogi Varya, (वेंकट योगिवर्य्य) Sri Bhattanath (श्रीभट्टनाथ) Ramanujaryya, (रामानुजार्य्य) Pranatarthiharacharyya (प्रणतार्थिहराचार्य्य,) and Devaraj Guru. (देवराजगुरु) Of these, the ten Alwars, the ten Purvacharyyas, Madhur Kavi Alvar, (मधुरकवि,) Srimalati Godamba, (श्रीमतीगोदाम्बा Tamil name-Andal आण्डाल) Ramanuja and his followers down to Vara-Vara-muni (वरवरमुनि) are all the Incarnations of the holy attendants of Vishnu, the Almighty God in Heaven. It is the works of these incarnations that are still preserved in the Madras

Presidency in the dialects of the Deccan,—viz, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and so on.

The manuscripts that I have myself studied with the help of the living saints of southern India are (1) Tiruppavai (तिरुप्पावै) (2) Tiruppalandu (तिरुप्पलान्दु) (3) Khanninun-Siruthamba (कन्नियुनशिरुताम्बु) all in Tamil ; the first composed by Srimati Gadamba, the incarnation of Lakshmi, the second composed by her father Vishnu Chitta Swami, or Bhattanath Alvar, the place of incarnation of both being at Sri-Villuputtur, some twenty-five miles off Satar Station, South Madras Railway. I have visited the place and made acquaintance of one of greatest saints of Southern India there, namely, the holy Siruppillur Swami, above eighty years old. The third was composed by Madhura-kavi Alvar, the disciple of Sathakapa Alvár, whose birth place is Alvar Terunagari some twenty miles off Tinneveli Bridge Railway Station, close to Tuticorin terminus of the South Madras Railway. I visited this place likewise and formed the acquaintance of three Jeeyars or Holy sannyasis who are all highly advanced saints of Southern India, and who threw additional light on the sacred Literature of the South studied by me.

The manuscripts named above together with the fourth one namely Ramanuja Noothandadi, I studied with the help of His Holiness Appan Govinda Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami who occupies the sacred chair of His Holiness the Late Yambar Jeeyar Swami at Sriperambudur, the birth place of Ramanuja Swami in the District of Chinglepet, in the Madras Presi-

dency. The Principal of the Sanskrit College at Sriperumbudur, the learned Nrisinha Cheryya Swami also helped me a good deal in my study of the above four sacred manuscripts which contain the essence of the Visistadvaita (विशिष्टाद्वैतवाद) theory as propounded by the Great Ramanuja and his predecessors and followers. Other manuscripts that I have studied are (1) Prameya Sekhar (प्रमेयशेखर) (2) Prapanna Paritrana (प्रपन्नपरित्राण) (3) Nigamanpadi (निगमनपदी—Tamil name) (4) Ashtasloki (अष्टश्लोकी) of the great Bhattaraka Swami, (भट्टारकस्वामी) with commentaries by his successors (5) Tattwatraya with commentaries (तत्त्वत्रय) (6) Mamukshapadi (मुमुक्षुपदी) with commentaries (7) Arthapanchaka (अर्थपञ्चक) (8) Archiradi (अर्चिरादि) (9) Gadyattraya (गद्यत्रय) by Ramanuja Swami (10) Ashtadasa Rahasya (अष्टादशरहस्य) and (11) Prapannamrita (प्रपन्नामृत). In the study of these manuscripts I have received material help from the late Pundarikaksha Swami, who was a disciple of the great Badhul Baradācharyya, (बाधूलवरदाचार्य), also from his Holiness the late Yadugiri Yatiraj Swami (यदुगिरि यतिराज स्वामी) of Melkote in Mysore, from his Son-in-law, the late Yogi Partha Sarathy Aiyangar B. A., B. L., Vakil of the Madras High Court, from M. O. Partha Sarathy Aiyengar Esqr. M. A. B. L., District Judge, Rajahmundry and others.

I have visited most of the important places in Southern India which are connected with the history of Ramanujā Swami and his predecessors and followers; for instance, places of antiquity like

Triplicane (तिरुवल्लिकण—Tamil name) Madras, Trivellore, (वौचारण्य* Sanskrit name) Sri Perumbudur, (ओभूनपुरी) Madhur Mangal, Conjeeveram (कांचौपुरी (Kānchi) Tirupathi (तिरुपत्तोपर्वत) (uphill) or Venkatadri, (वेंकटाद्रि) Tirukkovillur (तिरुक्कोविल्लुर) Chidamvaram, (श्रीमुण्णम्) Sri Mushnam, Shiyali, (तिरुनगरी) Tirunagari in Tanjore (श्रीकुम्भकोणम्) Districts Kombakonam, Trichinopolly Urayur, (खेताद्रि) Swetadari, Singaperummul koil (Tamil name) Tirukkanpuri, Madura, (वनगिरि पर्वत) Banagiri-hill or South Venkotachalam, Tiru mouhura (तिरुमौहर), the Divyadesa of Kalmegha Bhagwan, Sri Villuputtur, Alvár Tirunagari, Banadri hills (Nagneru) and Tirukkurangnri or Kuranganagari, of which Sriperumbudar, the birth place of Ramanuja in the district of Chinglepet in Madras, twenty five miles west of Madras, is the most famous place of antiquity. It is the principal seat of ancient learning in Southern India and the resort of the living saints and sages of Southern India. His Holiness the late Embar Jeeyar Swami was the most distinguished saint of southern India. His chair is now occupied by his Holiness Appan Govinda Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, who has very kindly helped me in studying the principal manuscripts mentioned above.

The following pages are full of thought and sentiments which are the outcome of a long course of religious discipline and spiritual culture. I present

* वौचारण्य—Where Sálíhotra Rishi (शालिहोत्ररषि) after a severe penance for many a year revealed the glory of a special manifestation of God.

them to the University of Calcutta with the hope that they might prove interesting to the students of Theology and may be an important step towards the Advancement of Learning.

The whole subject is divided into two parts, namely, (a) The Dawning of Conscience in England and (b) The Dawning of Conscience in India. The second part contains the thoughts and sentiments of the sages of southern India. The study of the first part will help materially in understanding the main current of thought underlying the second Part.

The important points of this Thesis which will prove interesting to everyone are :—

(1) The conception of the Divine Mother in the sphere of Theology.

(2) The easiest method of Self-reformation.

(3) The Purificatory Acts that are essential to the daily routine of every student of Theology.

(4) The names of the leading Saints of Southern India who flourished in the course of the last fifty centuries and more. Their glories are sung in the concluding chapter.

(5) The whereabouts of the living saints of Southern India.

(6) The names and situations of the holy places of antiquity in Southern India where we can gather valuable information regarding almost every branch of knowledge.

(7) The broad catholicism and the excellent features of the doctrines of the great Ramanuja

Swami who lived for one hundred and twentyfive years (1018—1143 A.D.)

(8) The interest it awakens in the mind of everyone in having a taste of the sacred literature of the South which is a store-house of the best thoughts and sentiments of the saints and sages of southern India.

A critical study of this Thesis will tend to promote the cause of Advancement of Learning.

The writer of the Thesis has been studying the sacred literature of the South for the last fifteen years and more, and, how far he has succeeded in his efforts may be judged from the following extracts from a letter written to him by M.O. Parthasarathy Aiyengar Esq. M. A., M L, District Judge of Rajahmundry.

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My dear Sir,

Rajahmundry

6 November, 1908

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I congratulate you upon your study of Ramanuja Nottandadi. I have done it myself and I fully concur in your opinion that it is a rare book. It is the result of a devoted practice of the true Sri Vaishnava doctrine—devotion to the Lord's devotees infinitely more than devotion to the Lord himself.

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I am glad your study of the book has borne rich fruit at once, as I am happy to learn your munificent donation of Rupees three thousand towards the Matha (मठ), in memory of His Holiness

the late Embar Jeeyar Swami. Whatever good is done to His Holiness Appan Govinda Ramanuja Swami, I consider, is done to me personally. His Holiness is quite a phenomenon and is a standing proof of the powers of Acharyya Kataksha (आचार्यकटाक्ष). I am sorry I can not keep your contribution strictly confidential and perhaps you are wrong in making the request. If proclaimed, your act may afford an example and may induce some other noble hearted devotee to follow your footsteps in serving Bhagavatas (भागवताः).

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It is really a wonder of wonders to me how you, without the least knowledge of Tamil, have been able to study our sacred literature, essentially in Tamil, and how you have attained such a degree of proficiency therein as to reduce to practice the doctrines preached therein.

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May your 'Kainkaryya Sri' (कैकर्य श्री:) prosper and prosper."

From the above extract it would appear that the writer of this Thesis has studied the sacred literature of the South with the help of one of the greatest saints of southern India, namely, His Holiness Appan Govinda Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, who occupies the sacred chair of His Holiness the late Embar Jeeyar Swami at Sriperumbudur (in the district of Chingleput) the celebrated birth place of the great Ramanuja Swami, as well as with the help of other advanced sages of India.

The sacred Literature of the South preserved in Tamil as well as in Sanscrit is a rich store-house of the thoughts and sentiments of the saints and sages who flourished in Southern India in the course of the last fifty centuries and more. Their value as a means of true education is really inestimable and their reputation as excellent works on Literature is world-wide. From the very early part of his life the writer of this Thesis had felt a strong inclination to study these sacred Books, and, he had an access to them only when he got an opportunity of being duly initiated as a Sri Vaishnava after he had succeeded in going through the ordeal indispensably necessary to such an initiation. He now feels that his labours would be amply rewarded if only he succeed in communicating and circulating among his friends and the learned people of the world those precious thoughts and sentiments which were given vent to in Tamil by the mighty sage Sathakopa Swami and his predecessors and followers who sang the whole Veda in Tamil simply because the original Vedas in Sanskrit were too difficult for men in general. The Tamil Veda or *Dramidopanishada* as it is called, is very easy and is open to all sincere students of Theology and to all those who are really anxious of knowing the shortest cut to Heaven and Heaven's king, without any distinction whatever of caste, creed or colour.

PURNEA,

September, 1910. }

R. D. B.

The Dawning of Conscience

INTRODUCTION.

मंगलानुशासनम् ।

श्रीशैलेशदयापात्रं धीभक्त्यादिगुणार्णवं ।

यतीन्द्रप्रवणं वन्दे रम्यजामातरं मुनिम् ॥

अपगतमदमानैरन्तिमोपायनिष्ठै ।

रधिगत परमार्थैरर्थकामानपेक्षै ॥

निखिलजनमुद्धृद्भिर्भिर्जितक्रोधलोभै ।

वरवरमुनिभृत्यै रस्तु मे नित्ययोगः ॥

Benedictory Lines :—Bow down before the all-holy and all-blessed sage Ramya-Jamatri-muni or Vara-Vara-muni, who is devotedly attached to the King of Yatis or Sannyasis, namely, the Great Ramanuja ; who was the deserving recipient of the kindness and affections of his venerable preceptor, Sri Sailes Swami, and who was the ocean of knowledge, wisdom, reverence, piety and other good graces of an ideal man.

Again,

May I enjoy the blessing of eternal union with the Blessed Beings, the devoted servants of the all-

blessed Vara-Vara-muni, who are the friends of all creatures in the universe, who have subdued their anger and avarice, who are indifferent to worldly gains, wealth or other unworthy objects of desire, who have attained the real end of existence which consists in the eternal servitude of the Lord's devotees—the last means of salvation—and who are absolutely free from the slightest tinge of selfishness self-conceit or arrogance.

PART I.

THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE (IN ENGLAND).

"I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes."

(Tennyson—"In Memoriam" xxvii.)

The world with its manifold attractions is too much for man. It is so all-engrossing that it hardly leaves him any leisure to think of anything beyond itself. It deprives him of his innate cheerfulness of spirit and wisdom, and causes him to forget the true mission of his life. It lures him away from the path of virtue and makes him a creature of circumstances, a plaything for vice and temptations, and a tool in the hands of designing men. He feels his misery, but, he is unable to shake off the yoke. His subjection is complete, but, he is altogether powerless to free himself from the fetters which he has imposed on himself by his own folly and weakness.

Time which blunts the edge of all things terrestrial, at last comes to his rescue and takes away the sharpness of his sufferings. He is gradually reconciled to his lot and begins to like

his own position in life. So bitter is the irony of fate and so much accustomed does he become to the miseries of this life that hell itself seems a heaven to him and it becomes difficult to induce him to think of a better condition of life even as it was difficult to induce the old prisoner to think of returning to his happy home in his native land on his release from the prison,—the prisoner who had passed so many years of his life in the prison and who had grown so inured to his misfortunes that he at last began to like his position in the gaol and ultimately, forgot his home and all his connections there. The prison itself gradually became so dear to him that he would never even think of his release from it, nay, he would turn away from the very idea of exchanging his captivity for his freedom.

Just so with the lot of man on this earth. The outward fascinations of this world make him blind to the inward miseries of life. The temptations of this world are too strong for him. He is led by them so completely that he is incapable of resisting them. The world at last becomes all in all to him; it becomes his dear object of love and his attachment to it grows so strong that he would shudder at the very idea of exchanging it for anything better. He would laugh at the great man who said, "Trailing clouds of glory do we come from God who is our home." To him Heaven is an Utopia and the glories of heaven are all confined to this earth. He is so much attracted by the temptations of this world that he cannot conceive of anything else. His imagina-

tion is incapable of picturing a better world and a better state of existence.

Mediaeval christianity had emphasised on the nothingness of this world and the transitory state of this life and taught man to think of Heaven and the salvation of man from the miseries of this life. It taught him to make light of worldly concerns and think only of his emancipation from the sufferings of this life by austerities and asceticism. It was only salvation that stirred the deep religious thoughts of men of that age and the history of the Middle Ages teems with illustrations of christians whose lives were a strict school of discipline, who waged a life-long struggle with the common enemy of mankind, won a glorious victory and a still more glorious position in heaven—a position, which, in its very essence, is eternal and which transcends the glories of this earth.

The Renaissance, however, brought about a complete change in the thoughts of men, the idea of heaven and salvation vanished from their minds and the pleasures and attractions of this world began to stir the imagination of poets and the thoughts of men in general. The Renaissance is the period (in the fifteenth century) at which the revival of arts and letters took place marking the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world. This is known to be the Pagan Renaissance which marks the development of the imaginative faculty and of the thinking faculty. The budding forth of the imagination may be seen in the dramas of Massinger and Ford, of

Webster, Dekkar, and Marlowe culminating in the marvellous productions of Shakespeare. Poetry received its adornment in the hands of Spenser and Science was moulded anew by Sir Francis Bacon who inaugurated the Inductive Method and thus became the Father of Modern Science. Shakespeare, Spenser and Bacon are the three finest flowers of the Renaissance period in the Elizabethan age of English Literature and Science. Science is proud of an work like the *Novum Organum*, Poetry of her Faery Queen and Drama of her Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth and Lear.

This Renaissance was at first temporal in its very essence and it is therefore called the Pagan Renaissance. It affords a striking contrast to Mediæval Christianity. The vision of Peres the Plowman and the glories of heaven no longer find a place in the imagination of poets and of men in general. Men no longer sacrifice the world and the worldly interests for the sake of a glorious heaven as they did in the Middle Ages. The earth now began to seem to them to be very good. The pleasures of this earth attracted them so much that they had hardly any time to think of the pleasures of heaven. So that the Pagan Renaissance, though it was a gain on the one hand, was a loss on the other. It was a worldly gain, but, it was a spiritual loss. Fortunately, however, the Pagan Renaissance was soon followed by the Christian Renaissance which, to a certain extent, made amends for this loss. The Christian Renaissance saw the development of the Reformation which began in the

days of Wycliffe and the Lollards. The sacrifice of this life for an eternal life in heaven again began to stir the thoughts of men so much that they courted death as a welcome guest who would free them from all fears of religious persecution. "Be of good cheer, Master Ridley; we shall this day light such a light as we hope, by God's grace, shall never be extinguished" became the watchword of the day and the history of the Reformation is only a history of saints and martyrs who made light of worldly concerns in the hope of enjoying a glorious, peaceful and blessed life in heaven. The *Paradise Lost*, the *Paradise Regained* and other works of the Period breathe the same divine sentiment. Cromwell and his Army, the New Model, who always made a conscience of all they did and who thereby turned the tide of war in favour of the Parliamentarians by dealing the death blow to the proud cavalry of Prince Rupert afford another illustration of the superiority of a religious life over a mere worldly life and the literary productions of this period are saturated with the divine idea of an eternal, all-peaceful, and all-blessed hereafter which constantly reminds us of the nothingness of this world as compared to the glories of heaven.

In watching the course of the dawning of conscience in the Modern Age we need only take into consideration the works of the late Poet Laureate of England, the universally lamented Lord Tennyson who is very aptly called the Representative Poet in England. He has culled the best and choicest flowers of the poetic garden and adorned his poetical works

with the finest specimens of poetry. The beauties of Shakespeare and Milton, of Wordsworth and Shelley, of Dryden and Pope, of Cowper and Chaucer, of Gay and Grey are all seen in their native grandeur in the Poetry of Lord Tennyson. When we think of the following lines,

“ Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we can not prove.”

(In Memoriam).

We adore Tennyson for his reverence, piety and deep religious faith. Again when we read the following lines

· “We have but faith and faith alone, we can not know
For knowledge is of things we see
Yet we trust it comes from thee
· A beam in darkness, let it grow.”

we understand the relative importance of knowledge as compared to faith. For, whereas knowledge is confined within the nutshell of the visible world alone, faith gives us an insight into the invisible, unlimited and the unknown. Still, the poet gives knowledge the place it deserves and prays that it may prove to be “a beam in the darkness of our ignorance” and that it may grow side by side with faith.

Of all the poets in England, it is only Tennyson who teaches us how to believe in a personal God and how to make our wills subservient to the will of the Lord. Thus,

"Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest holiest manhood Thou ;
 Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
 Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

(*Idem*)

These lines sum up the sentiments of a man who has a firm faith in a personal God, his Saviour, and who prays fervently that he may be so blessed as to live only for the sake of carrying out the wishes of the Divine Father and who prays that his sole bliss may consist in serving the Lord with his whole heart. In other words the above four lines teach us faith in a personal God and Absolute Resignation.

Tennyson is not only the representative poet of England but he is pre-eminently a deeply religious poet. And in this sense he excels all his predecessors. If Shakespeare stands unique in the dramatic world, Tennyson shines supreme in the religious world. In every line of his prelude to the "In Memoriam" we are enlivened with a new idea which touches a sympathetic chord in the heart of all good men. Tennyson's greatness consists in his deep sense of humility, and his prayer for the good of all mankind. For instance, when he says

"We are fools and slight ;
 We mock Thee when we do not fear ;
 Yet help thy foolish ones to bear ;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light."

(*Idem*)

We feel inclined to fall at the feet of Tennyson and worship him as our spiritual preceptor. He prays

for the salvation of all vainglorious, foolish and sinful hearts and his words breathe the lofty, pure, unselfish and divine sentiment of the Saviour himself. His prayer is so sweet and eloquent that it wears off the hard crust of materialism and makes us sensitive to the feelings of a faithful heart, the faithful heart of the faithful servant of the All-merciful Lord. His firm faith in the efficacy of prayers shines forth with the greatest lustre when he solemnly sings

“Thrice blessed whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher loves endure,
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?”

(Idem)

Again,

“More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?”

(Passing of Arthur)

England has seen many a religious poet. But Tennyson stands foremost among the rank. His excellence lies in the boldness of his poetic imagination, the clearness of his poetic conceptions, the depth of his religious sentiments, the sincerity of his beliefs, the purity of his thoughts, the loftiness of his ideas, the sweetness of his temper and the natural and harmonious combination of all the poetic graces in

his great poems. His style is so simple and at the same time so eloquent that it commands the admiration of all his readers. He would always be dearly remembered for his deep and sincere religious faith and his "In Memoriam" would always continue to hold its head very high as one of the loftiest monuments and one of the finest specimens of architecture in the region of poetry. We may trace the course of the Dawning of Conscience in every line of this great work. Tennyson notices with regret the religious deterioration of his countrymen and he is almost impatient of their want of faith and their tendency towards gross materialism. In this respect he is always at one with Carlyle who is now regarded as an extraordinary phenomenon in England. Carlyle is a Goethe in English garb. It is he who has introduced the Transcendental Philosophy of Germany into England. When he wrote his Hero-Worship, he was fifty years ahead of his contemporaries. It is only to-day that England has learnt how to appreciate the merit of his great works. The Dawning of Conscience may be clearly seen in his Hero-Worship, specially in that part of the work where he depicts his hero in the form of a prophet. Carlyle bemoans with more than Byronic despondency the irresistible movement of time and the spiritual decay of the age. He is loud in his complaint that faith and religion are both at a low ebb in his time and that the people are all blindly running into the vortex of impiety, irreverence and irreligion. Both Carlyle and Tennyson did their best to save England from the

risk of running into Atheism and Materialism, both of them achieved success in their honest endeavours in this direction and both of them set noble examples to their countrymen. Their actions were only the outcome of the Dawning of Conscience.

To sum up what has been said above. The Dawning of Conscience is first seen in England in Langland's "Vision of William concerning Peres the Plowman" and in the attempts of Wycliffe and his followers, the Lollards, to convince men that they can be saved from their sins only by taking a good care of their conscience. Throughout the Middle Ages, men thought of salvation only and made light of this world. They tried to obtain their salvation by a regular course of self-denial, by a systematic practice of austerities and asceticism, and by following a life of spotless purity. During the Pagan Renaissance, men in general were so much led by the attractions of this life and the temptations of this world that they took little or no notice of their conscience. Fortunately, however, this period did not last long. Nature is never an indulgent mother and those of her children that disregarded her inviolable laws had to pay dearly for their folly and it was not long before they discovered how they had yielded to the charms and pleasures of this world and how they had been led astray from the path of virtue. With the dawn of the Christian Renaissance conscience awoke, men became deeply religious and the glories of Heaven again began to stir their imagination so deep that men died by thousands by preferring

the life of a martyr to that of religious stagnation. In the modern age, the Dawning of Conscience alters its guise and appears in another garb. The thought of man's duty to his neighbour and other fellow-creatures takes the place of the thought of individual salvation. The noble lives and examples of Miss Florence Nightingale and of Sister Dora (Miss Pattison) teach men how this life may be sweetened by sacrificing it in a noble cause,—that of relieving the distress of mankind. The lives of Blake and mighty Nelson, of Walpole and Pitt inspire men with the idea of sacrificing their lives in the noblest cause, namely, the performance of their duties. The noblest example set by Nelson in the Battle of Trafalgar when he ordered the memorable signal, "England expects every man to do his duty," to be hoisted and when he faced death like a hero saying "Thank God, I have done my duty" are lessons which teach the world how to perform their duties and how to cherish the memory of Nelson with deep love and gratitude. In the Middle Ages men were sick of this life and this world, and thought only of ascending heaven by penances and mortifications. In the modern age, this world itself seems to be very good inasmuch as it affords ample opportunity of distinguishing ourselves by a noble self-sacrifice. Man is no longer sick of this life but he has learnt how this life may be profitably employed in serving mankind. Man's duty to his neighbour and other fellow-creatures is now of greater importance than his individual salvation. The modern age, therefore, has its bright side as well as its dark side. Those who

think that it is merely an age of moral deterioration and degeneration, should remember that it is also pre-eminently an age of spiritual evolution. The philosophers of to-day are all anxious about the general welfare of mankind. Most of them are busily engaged in comparing the philosophical systems of to-day with those of ancient times and they are all anxious to know how the ancient Sages of India tried to solve the difficult problems of life. They have begun to study side by side Plato, Aristotle, DesCartes, Kant, Hegel, Mill, Martineau, Sully, Sankaracharyya, Madhvacharyya and the great Ramanuja.

The philosophers of these days do not waste their precious time in mere idle speculations. They are not merely dealers in theories. But it is practice with which they are essentially concerned. How to be a philosopher in practice, how to improve the condition of mankind in general, has become the question of the day. They do not think so much of their own salvation as they think of the salvation of others. They teach men the great lessons of Self-help and Brother-help.

As it would be a very interesting study to learn how the deep problems of life were solved by the Sages of India, and as the solutions arrived at were all the outcome of the Dawning of Conscience, we have now come to the point where the discussion of the subject matter really begins, namely, "The Dawning of Conscience in India."

India received its light of wisdom and civilisation at a time when all other parts of the world were

steeped in the darkness of ignorance. The Rig Veda, the most ancient monument of Aryan Literature, has been calculated by the western scholars to have been compiled at least forty centuries before Christ (*Vide* Sayce—Introduction to the Science of Language). The peculiar position of India and the natural advantages which it has always enjoyed made it the birth-place and fit habitation of many a *Mumukshu* (मुमुक्षु) or salvation-seeker, and of many saints and sages. How they attempted to solve the difficult problems of life will form the subject of discussion in the following chapters.

PART II.

THE DAWNING OF CONSCIENCE (IN INDIA).

CHAPTER I

The happiest moment of a man's life is that when his conscience awakes ; in other words, when he rouses from his long sleep in the cradle of ignorance, when he is roused to a state of self-consciousness and when he realises to himself the true mission of his life. This is the turning point of his life, turning away from the wrong to the right path—the path to eternal heaven. At this point, he repents bitterly for having wasted a precious life and feels an ardent desire to atone for his past misdeeds by repentance and resignation. He turns to his All-merciful Father, throws himself unconditionally at his Holy feet and implores his unconditional pardon. Absolute Resignation is followed by Absolute Grace and he now becomes an altered being. He is, as it were, born anew. The tears of repentance that flow profusely day and night wash off the impurities of his heart and he shines like a bright sun emerging from a dark cloud . Now that he is roused from his stupor, he resolves to pass the remaining few days of his life in carrying out the dearest wishes of the Lord of Heaven who has reclaimed him

after a long period of separation. He feels the truth of the idea contained in the following lines :

“अनादिमायया सुप्तः यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते ।

आत्मानञ्च यदा वेत्ति तदा भवति मोक्षभाक् ॥”

(Commentaries on the *रहस्यसूत्रम्* by

Vara-Vara-muni Swami)

The substance of this sloka has been given in the above paragraph.

It has been said ‘he is roused to a state of self-consciousness and he realises to himself the true mission of his life.’ Now, what is this mission? It is only the servitude of the Lord of the universe and of the Lord’s devotees. All living beings are in their very essence the servants of the Lord. There is no other distinguishing mark of a finite creature. So long as he lives on earth he lives only to carry out the wishes of God. When he attains salvation and is translated to the blessed abode of the Immortals who enjoy without cessation ‘the bliss immense of endless servitude Divine’ (Cf. Sruti—“सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः दिवौ च चक्षुराततम्”), there also does he share the blessings of his divine companions, the transcendental joy of serving the Lord of Heaven. Thus,

“दासभूताः स्वतः सर्वे ज्ञात्मानः परमात्मनः ।

नाम्यथा लक्षणं तेषां वन्द्ये मोक्षे च विद्यते ॥”

(*Idem*)

The Dawning of Conscience is the result of Aboupte Divine Grace :—When a man is continually and

repeatedly being ground down in the wheels of fortune, when he feels his misery to be complete, he cries piteously for Mercy. Thus, "Have pity on me, O All-merciful Father, 'Thou who givest shelter to those who find shelter nowhere, Thou who hast power to forgive the eternal sins of mankind. I freely confess I am the king of sinners. If Satan himself be multiplied hundred times over, he will not equal a grain of the mountainous heap of sins which lie ingrained in me. When I look at my own sins I am filled with a sense of deep despair. It seems to me that the hells that already exist will not suffice for me. A new hell more horrible than that which imagination can conceive must be created to receive a sinner like me. I am altogether powerless to describe even faintly what a hideous monster of a sinner I am, a shameless, fearless and never-repenting monarch of the deadliest of sinners." Thus,

“पापे कृते यदि भवन्ति भयानुताप-

सज्जाः पुनः करणमस्य कथं घटेत ।

मोहेन मे न भवतीह भयादि लेश

स्वस्मात् पुनः पुनरघं यतिराज कुर्वे ॥”

(यतिराजविंशति *by the great Vara-Vara-muni*)

So, when I look to myself and my own sins I am in a gulf of despair. But, when I am reminded of an All-merciful, All-forgiving Father, a father who is ever ready to welcome a sinful child like me, I am filled with unbounded hopes. I realise fully that it is only for a sinner like me that my Divine Father

exists, my father, who has power to forgive all sins and who has spared no pains to reclaim a rebellious son like me. My heart now beats with joy to think of my father, who sums up in himself all the virtues, namely, Mercy, Affection, Love, Tenderness, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Grace and countless others. For instance,

“स्वाभाविकाऽनवधिकातिशय — ज्ञानबलेश्वर्यवीर्यशक्तितेजः-
सौशील्यवात्सल्यमार्दवार्जवसौहार्दसौम्यकारुण्य-माधुर्यगाम्भीर्यौदार्य-
चातुर्यस्वैर्यधैर्यशौर्यपराक्रमसत्यकाम-सत्यसंकल्प-कृतित्व-कृतज्ञताद्य-
संख्येयकल्याणगुणगणौघमहार्षव ।”

(गद्यत्रय—by *Ramanuja*)

These lines enumerate some of the countless good graces and attributes of God.

When I am reminded of the infinite virtues of my Divine Father, I am at once purified and I feel that my father has received me unto His bosom and will never more part from me, whom he now regards as the dearest and most affectionate of all his children even as the new-born calf is to the cow. My joy is now unbounded, and my hopes are also unbounded. I feel more than anyone else that it is only a crowning act of Divine Mercy on me that I should be thus reclaimed by my father and that it is only His Absolute Grace which has now won me over to His side and has united me to Him for ever. Thus,

“एवं संसृति चक्रस्य भ्राम्यमाने मुहुर्मुहुः ।

जीवे दुःखाकुले विष्णोः कृपाकायुपजायते ॥”

(*Commentaries on अष्टादश रहस्य of Ramanuja Swāmi*)

The substance of this sloka is contained in the foregoing lines.

The Dawning of Conscience, therefore, is evidently the result of Absolute Grace (“कृपा काऽपि” i.e. काऽपि” विलक्षणा निर्हेतुकी कृपा ।)

CHAPTER II.

Now, if this Dawning of Conscience be the result of Absolute Grace, why does not this Grace descend upon all? Simply because all do not wish for it. Those who ask for it receive it. Those who do not require it do not receive it.

Thus,

“सर्व्वज्ञोऽपि हि देव्यः महाकारुणिकोऽपि सः ।

संसारतन्त्रवाहित्वात् रक्षापेक्षामपेक्षते ॥”

(सुसुक्ष्मपङ्क्ति by Lokacharyya Swami)

i.e. No doubt the Lord is all-knowing or omniscient, no doubt he is all-merciful, yet, as the good of the whole universe, consisting of myriads of worlds, hinges on His hands, He can only give a good thing to him who asks for it. If He give it to one who never wants it, it is sure to be thrown away. Grace and Mercy taste sweet only to those who feel keenly their necessity and ask for them. Food tastes sweet only to a hungry man, but, it is poison to one who is not at all hungry. For, “अज्ञौर्ध्वं भोजनं विषम् ।”

(रक्षकत्रय by Lokacharyya Swami)

Again it is only a truism that "what is meat to one is poison to another." As such, a good physician bears this fact always in his mind and never prescribes the same food to all his patients. God is never unkind and partial. Those who cry for His Mercy receive it and understand what it is. They find it to be very sweet simply because they hunger after it.

Does then God show no mercy to those who never ask for His mercy? Certainly he does. He dwells within their souls and thus saves them from perishing. He would never allow any soul to perish.

Thus, "अन्तर्यामित्वात् सत्तारक्षां करोति ।"

(*Idem*).

Those who never ask for His Grace and Mercy are His rebellious sons. But He never suffers even his rebellious sons to perish. He always spreads His protecting hand even upon them. Thus, no soul is ever allowed to perish however rebellious it might be. And, God is always anxious and eager to reclaim a rebellious soul, just as a father is always anxious to reclaim his rebellious son.

"मठभोजयिता पिता इव ।"

(*Idem*).

In southern India, when a son becomes rebellious, deserts his father's house and runs away, the father, in his tender solicitude for the welfare of his son, gives previous intimation to the heads of the Mathas (monasteries) where his boy is likely to have his

meal. A Matha is a charitable house in the Deccan where strangers and other hungry and forlorn creatures find food and drink gratis. The rebellious son runs away from home and goes wherever fancy leads him and when he feels hungry he turns to one of these Mathas where he is sure to be welcome and where he is sure to find a ready meal. Now, the father, out-of his natural affection even for a rebellious son, gives previous intimation to the heads of these Mathas so that his rebellious son may be well taken care of and find a ready meal whenever he may happen to go there. If, then, such be the solicitude of an earthly father even for a rebellious son, it is easy to imagine how much more it is with God, the Universal Father.. For in the capacity of *Antaryami* or Dweller in the heart, God always accompanies them wherever they go, takes every care of them and sees that their souls may not perish. Thus we see that God is not unkind even to the rebellious souls. But, it is only when they are redeemed and reclaimed, do they feel and understand what Grace and Mercy actually mean. So that "unkindness and partiality" can never be attributed to the Divine Father who never suffers even a rebellious soul to perish and who spares no pains to reclaim him. It is in ourselves that we are thus and thus,

“ ईश्वरे नेर्घृण्यवैषम्यं दोषापत्तिः कदापि न युज्यते ”

(*Idem*).

But, honest labour needs must have its reward and those who show special merits must necessarily have their special rewards from the Heavenly Father.

To return to the subject matter. When we are continually and repeatedly being crushed down by the miseries of this world we turn to our Heavenly Father and cry for Mercy and we have it at once. All other things in this world are to be had after due exertion. There is only one thing which can be had for the mere asking. It is Mercy. The mercy of God comes down upon us whenever we ask for it. It is always ready to appear and satisfy all our honest desires whenever we cry for it. How encouraging is this idea! So precious a thing, and given away for nothing—for the mere asking. Yes, Divine Mercy can always be had whenever we cry for it.

CHAPTER III.

Absolute Grace follows Absolute Resignation, but, Repentance precedes Resignation :—The deeper the consciousness of sin, the truer the spirit of religion ; and the deeper the sense of humility before the feet of our Lord, the surer the chance of attracting His sympathy and affection.

“न धर्मनिष्ठोऽस्मि न चात्मवेदी

न भक्तिमांस्वच्चरणारविन्दे ।

अकिञ्चनोऽनन्यगतिः शरण्यं

त्वत् पादमूलं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥”

(“*Al-mandar*” by *Yamunacharyya Swami*).

i. e. “Lord, I do not practise any virtue ; I have not a true knowledge of self.* I am altogether wanting in any feeling of reverence for Thy lotus-like holy Feet. I have literally nothing to please Thee and I am destitute of all means of saving myself. As Thou art the sole shelter of the shelterless, I surrender myself unconditionally before Thy Almighty’s Holy Feet.”

“न निन्दितं कर्म तदस्ति लोके

सहस्रशो यन्न मया व्यधायि ।

सोऽहं विपाकावसरे सुकुन्द

क्रन्दामि संप्रत्यगतिस्तवाग्रे ॥”

(*Idem*).

i. e., “There is no mean, ignoble, unworthy or wicked act in this world but I have committed it myself ; nay, I have committed the most heinous of all offences by thousands. And, now that my sins have reached their climax, now that they are followed by painful and unbearable stings of conscience, now that I find no one else who can save me at this crisis, I only cry for Mercy before Thee, O Lord, Thou Who hast power to save all, and Thou Who art the giver of all goods—the giver of भुक्ति (*Bhukti*) or happiness that we enjoy here as well as मुक्ति (*Mukti*) or Salvation.

‘ A Query :—You say you are the king of sinners—you say, if Satan himself were multiplied hundred

* A true knowledge of self includes a knowledge of God inasmuch as the relation between the two is as inseparable as the relation between the Soul and the Body.

times over, or, better, if the Progression—Satan + Satan² + Satan³ + Satan⁴.....were summed *ad infinitum*, the sum total will not bear comparison to a grain of the infinite unpardonable sins that lie ingrained in you," how can you then hope for Mercy and pardon? You freely confess, your sins are all unpardonable, how can you, then, hope for pardon? You say Satan himself multiplied *ad infinitum* can not equal you. Well, one Satan only has not been pardoned yet, how can the sum total of infinite Satans, then, be pardoned?

Answer —Satan has not been pardoned simply because he never repents and never asks for pardon. He has not yet been the object of Divine Mercy, only because he never prays for Mercy. He is the ideal of a rebellious soul who never repents for his folly and who never asks Heaven for Mercy. It is not so with me. I am a truly penitent king of All-Satans. Like Satan, I have been so long waging an eternal warfare with God, how long perhaps God himself does not remember, much less can I say with precision. I can only say that I have been a rebellious soul for a very very long period, from the very beginning of time, from the very beginning of the awakening of my consciousness and so far as my consciousness goes, I can also say that imagination can not conceive a greater rebel than I am. Still, I hope for pardon simply because I ask for it and simply because I know what Mercy means. God's mercy is meant only for a sinner like me. Paradoxical as it may sound, even God himself, though He is all-knowing, does not know the exact measure and limit of His Mercy. God

the All-knowing, does not know where His Mercy begins and where it ends and how deep it is. Divine Mercy is simply an unbounded ocean having no limit and no bottom. And God's Omniscience does not at all suffer in consideration of the fact that He does not know the limit and measure of His Mercy. A thing which does not at all exist can not be said to exist, and it is only meet that the Omniscience of God should know that there is a thing which does not exist at all, —the thing, namely, *the limit and measure of His Mercy*. For, if anyone were to say that he has really seen "a castle in the air," everyone would think there is something wrong in his brain. Thus,

“देव, त्वत् करुणावधिर्न मनुना नापि त्वया ज्ञायते ।

यद्यप्येव मयापि नैव भवतां सर्वज्ञता ज्ञीयते ॥

अज्ञास्त्वेव तदज्ञता मनुगुणं सर्वज्ञतायाः विदुः ।

अर्जुनाभोजमिदन्तया खलुविदन् भ्रान्तोऽयमित्युच्यते ” ॥

(“*Sayings and Prayers*” of Koores Swami).

It is clear, therefore, that the gulf of difference between Satan and me is very wide and that although he has not been pardoned, a king of all-Satans like me is sure to be pardoned. Satan is Satan only by virtue of his rebellion and only because he never repents and never asks for God's Mercy and Grace. I am, however, all penitent. I have surrendered myself unconditionally at the Holy Feet of the Almighty. And surely the All-merciful King of the virtuous and the good, will show mercy upon me, the king of sinners; nay, receive me with honour inasmuch as I am a

fallen hero. I have been till now heroically committing all kinds of sins and combating successfully against the King of Heaven. He is the all-glorious King of the Virtuous and I am the infinitely more glorious King of the sinners.

He, more than anyone else, is keenly aware how powerful and troublesome an opponent I have proved myself to him, and now that so mighty a hero surrendered himself unconditionally at His Holy Feet, He is sure to receive his heroic, now-submissive and reclaimed son unto His bosom with pride, affection, love, joy and glory.

A second Query :—You say, You are the king of sinners and vice personified. As such, your words must all be necessarily tainted with hypocrisy, insincerity and dissimulation. Your words are all false. Your repentance is not at all permanent and sincere, but only skin-deep and momentary. It does not arise from the bottom of your heart. Your repentance and resignation are only insincerity and hypocrisy in disguise. How should you, then, hope for Mercy, pardon and grace ?

Answer :—True, my words are all insincere and full of hypocrisy and I do not at all desire at heart what I wish for by words of mouth only. I am full of those evils which cause a man always to turn away from God. My prayers breathe only insincerity and dissimulation. Still, I pray that the All-tolerant Lord, out of his Absolute Grace, would make pure what in me is impure and would teach my insincere

heart to become truly sincere and my rebellious mind to become obedient and submissive.

I am fully aware that everything in me is impure and what I say is all insincere. But, as I am now praying before the throne of the All-pure and the All-sincere Lord in a spirit of deep humility and absolute resignation, I have every hope of becoming free from all my impurities and insincerities through His Absolute Grace. Just as a very powerful philosopher's stone (fabulous though it is) can readily convert a base mineral into gold, so the All-pure Lord has the power of making an impure and insincere heart pure and sincere.

Again, just as a mountain of magnetism has the irresistible power of attracting towards it even a heavy mass of iron, so the infinite goodness of the Lord has the power of drawing towards Him an iron-hearted blockhead like me with all his weight of sins.

Besides, I have something which others have not and which makes me hope that I am the most deserving recipient of God's Grace. When a man approaches the Lord he always takes with him some rich presents to please the Lord (for instance, कर्म, ज्ञान, भक्ति, वेराग्य, साधना i.e. Virtuous acts, Wisdom, Reverence, Indifference to worldly things, Piety, Devotion and the like, these being the objects which are worthy of being offered as presents to the Lord) in accordance with the principle, "रिक्तहस्तेन नोपेयात् राजानं शुद्धवतम्" i. e. "Never approach the king, the

spiritual preceptor or the Diety empty-handed." But I have none of these, neither virtue, nor wisdom nor piety, nor reverence, nor anything else to please the Lord. Rather, I am full of their very opposites, namely, vice, impiety, irreverence and the like. Again, a man tries to save himself by his own merits. But I can boast of none. I have *nothing* to please the Lord and I have *nothing* to save me. My only possession is a pair of "Nothings" (आकिञ्चन्य and अनन्यत्वं.) I have that which none can boast of. This precious pair of jewels, (the pair of Nothings,) this invaluable possession, I offer to the Lord when I approach His august presence, and, as none has offered such a rich present to the Lord ever before, it is only natural that of all others, I should be able to court the very best of all the Divine favours. Up to this, the Lord has not come across so great a sinner as I am. And surely the Lord has now a golden opportunity of bestowing his favours upon. I am the best and the most deserving candidate for His Absolute Grace. And surely the Lord would have cause to repent if he reject such a worthy candidate and send him away disappointed. In fact the Lord has not up to this time come across anyone on whom he might exercise his great virtues namely, Absolute Grace, Infinite goodness, Infinite Mercy, Infinite affection, love and the like, which have been so long rusting as it were for want of exercise. I am *such* a man, and the fittest object of exercising his infinite virtues upon. Surely the Lord will not lose such a capital opportunity of bestowing

his blessings and favours upon one who is the best and the most deserving recipient of them. So that I may say without pride that I am a proud man to-day inasmuch as I have presented to the Lord two such things, which, up to this time, no one has been able to make a present of, namely, a pair of "Nothings," which, in the estimation of the Lord is the most valuable of all gifts that a sinner can offer to Him. For, it is said,

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure,
Richer by far is the hearts adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

And surely, I am the most poor of all his creatures, for, I am poor in everything ("अकिञ्चनोऽस्मि"). Have I not, then, every hope of receiving His Absolute Grace and Mercy when I am the best object of His Grace and Mercy? Ask the Lord Himself and He would resolve all your doubts.

Thus the awakened man, at the dawn of his Conscience repents bitterly for what he has done and then resigns himself to the Absolute Mercy of the all-forgiving, all-merciful, all-beneficent and all-protecting Father, Who is only too glad to reclaim him and Who is ever ready to receive him into His Kingdom, where he is to enjoy eternal happiness by singing the glory and praise of the Almighty Father.

CHAPTER IV.

True Resignation or Absolute Resignation, as it is called, immediately bears golden fruits. But it is necessary fully to understand what Absolute Resignation really means. The beautiful lines of the great sage, Yámunacharyya Swami, give us a vivid idea of the thing. Thus,

“निरासकस्यापि न तावदुत्सहे ।

महेयं ज्ञातुं तव पादपंकजं ॥

रुषा निरस्तोऽपि शिशुस्तनन्वयो ।

न जातु मातुश्चरणौ जिहासति ॥”

(“*Al-mandár*” or *Hymn of Hymns* by
Yámunácháryya Swámi).

In the above sloka, the blessed being who has resigned himself absolutely to the mercy of the Lord and bowed down before His Almighty's Holy Feet says :—“Mighty Lord, I implore Thy forgiveness and earnestly entreat Thee to receive a fallen creature like me unto Thy favour ; my resignation is sincere, for, even if Thou goest so far as to spurn at me, I will not dare to forsake Thy Lotus-like Feet. If a mother be ever angry with her suckling baby and throw it aside in a fit of momentary disgust, what does it do ? It only cries piteously and turns to its mother's feet again. It never thinks of forsaking its mother's feet. Just so with me, O Lord. Shouldst

Thou even spurn at me I would not dare to forsake
Thy Holy Lotus-like Feet. I would rather cling
to It all the more.

This gives us a true picture of Absolute Resignation. It produces the desired effect at once. For, the Lord immediately receives the fallen creature unto His bosom and showers upon him all His affectionate blessings, just as the mother, in the case cited above, lifts up her baby, kisses it again and again, and bathes it in her tears of affection and love.

It must be noted here that the Holy Feet of the Lord emblematically represents the Saviour Himself—the Saviour of mankind, who alone has the power to take upon Himself the burden of sins of all creatures and thus save them and reconcile them to the Lord. The Lord may reject a sinful creature out of a consideration of his enormous sins, but, His Holy Feet can never do the same. As soon as he falls at His Holy Feet, all his sins are forgiven and he is reconciled to the Lord. The Holy Feet is the Mediator between the Lord and the sinful creatures. The Holy Feet has the power to reconcile them to the Lord. And the rationale is not far to seek. It is a fact that when we fall at the feet of the person whom we have offended we are at once pardoned. It may be seen at any moment in the Law Courts, specially in Bengal. Old and experienced lawyers, in compoundable cases, generally cause the offender or the accused to fall at the feet of the complainant and ask his forgiveness, and, the parties are immediately reconciled

to each other. When we can please even a hard-hearted man by falling at his feet, no wonder we should be able to please our Almighty Father, who is very well described as the Ocean of kindness, by falling at His Holy Feet. The Holy Feet is thus the Saviour of sinners.

We are indebted to the Visistádwaita System of Philosophy for this grand discovery in Theology. This system of philosophy as propounded by the Great Ramanuja and his predecessors firmly assures us that the Holy Feet of God are no other than the two Saviours of mankind, namely, (1) the Great Alvár, Sathakopa Śwami, and (2) Ramanuja Swami, the first being the incarnation of *Visvaksena* (विष्णुसेन) who is the controller of the whole universe, the second being the incarnation of *Anantadeva* or the Ideal Servant of God in Heaven. If we read the Lives of Sathakopa Swami and of Ramanuja Swami with the help of the sacred records that are preserved in Tamil and interpreted in the light of the superior wisdom of the modern saints of Southern India, we shall at once find that they justly deserve the title of the Saviour.

The following lines also give us an idea of Absolute Resignation.

विज्ञापनमिदं देव शृणुष्व पुरुषोत्तम ।

“पापण्डुधर्मसंकीर्णं भगवद्भक्तिवर्जितं ।

कलौ जातौऽस्मि देवेश सर्वधर्मं वहिष्मृते ॥ १ ॥

कथं त्वामसमाचारः पापप्रसवभूरहम् ।

अर्चयामि दयासिन्धो पाहि मां शरणगतम् ॥ २ ॥

तापत्रयदवाग्नी च दह्यमानं सदा विभो ।
 पाहि मां पुण्डरीकाक्ष केवलं कृपया तव ॥ ३ ॥
 जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधि दुःखसन्तप्तदेहिनम् ।
 पालयाशु दृशादेव तव कारुण्यगर्भया ॥ ४ ॥”

“इन्द्रियाणि मया जेतुमशक्यं पुरुषोत्तम ।
 शरीरं ममदेवेश व्याधिभिः परिपीडितम् ॥ ५ ॥
 मनो मे पुण्डरीकाक्ष विषयानेव धावति ।
 वाणी मम हृषीकेश मिथ्यापारुष्य दूषिता ॥ ६ ॥
 एवं साधनहीनोऽहं किं करिष्यामि केशव ।
 रक्ष मां कृपया देव भवाब्धौ पतितं सदा ॥ ७ ॥”

“अपराध सहस्रानां सहस्रमयुतं तथा ।
 भर्तुदं चाप्यसंख्येयं करुणाब्धे क्षमस्व मे ॥ ८ ॥
 यच्चापराधं कृतवानज्ञानात् पुरुषोत्तम ।
 अग्नस्व मम देवेश तत् सर्वं क्षन्तुमर्हसि ॥ ९ ॥
 अग्नत्वादल्पशक्तित्वादात्स्याद्दुष्टभावेनात् ।
 कृतापराधं कृपणं क्षन्तुमर्हसि मां विभो ॥ १० ॥
 यज्जन्मनः प्रभृति मोहवशं गतेन ।
 नानापराधशतमाचरितं मया ते ॥
 अन्तर्वह्निश्च सकलं तव पश्यतोऽपि ।
 क्षन्तुं त्वमर्हसि हरे करुणावशेन ॥ ११ ॥
 कर्मणा मनसा वाचा या चेष्टा ममनित्यशः ।
 केशवाराधने सा स्वात्मजन्मान्तरेष्वपि ॥ १२ ॥”

(इति श्रीपञ्चरात्रागमे महोपनिषदि ब्रह्मतन्त्रे [श्रीमदष्टाक्षरकल्पे
 “जितन्त्रे स्तोत्रे” Quoted from “Mahopanishada—
 Pancharatra—Jitante—Stottram).”

The purport of the above quotations may be thus given :—"Deign to listen to my humble prayers, O Lord, Thou who art the Giver-of-all-goods. 'The time is out of joint. Religion is at a discount in these days. Virtue is ostracised and virtuous acts are expunged from the list of Duties. Worship of the Lord, Faith and Reverence, Devotion, Piety and Servitude of the Lord's devotees are things altogether unknown, or, if known at all, altogether discouraged. Virtuous men are being hard pressed on all sides these days. Such is the state of things and such is the time when I am born. And I myself am the father of Sin. The word Satan occurs only in books, but, if anyone were so curious as to see what Satan actually is, let him only turn to me and he will at once see Satan in all his glory. I am literally the king of infinite Satans and I am really a hell of nuisance. Is it possible, then, that a creature like me should be able to adore Heaven?'

The answer is, of course, twofold ; "No, impossible," "Yes, possible". This, again, sounds like a paradox, but, it is nevertheless literally true. When I turn to myself and my own imperfections, the answer would be in the negative. But, when I turn to the Lord and the Infinite goodness of the Lord, the answer would be in the affirmative. Though my imperfections do not allow me to turn to the Lord and adore Him, yet, as the Lord is all-merciful and all-forgiving He would, out of His Absolute Grace, receive me unto his favour by freeing me of all my

imperfections. Such is my own strong conviction. A sinner like me is the best object of Divine Grace.

“Lord, as I have surrendered myself unconditionally at Thy Holy Feet and to Thy Mercy, I hope Thou wouldst receive me unto Thy favour and teach me how to adore Thee.”

‘Most Gracious Lord, I am being constantly consumed in the flames of three fires, which reach the spirits inner deeps, and, which are the source of endless and unforeseen agonies—mental, spiritual and physical. Thus I am the most miserable wretch in the universe. Save me, O Lord, by casting a kind glance upon me. Thy kind and affectionate glance sprinkles nectar, revives and re-animates drooping souls and confers happiness on a sorrow-stricken heart. Let Thy Absolute Grace shield me from all dangers.’

‘Again, let thy kind look which is pregnant with mercy, nourish and develop a poor helpless creature who is a prey to the afflictions arising from birth, death, disease and old age.’

‘The highest, holiest manhood Thou, O Lord, wouldst Thou very kindly listen to my prayer? I humbly submit that I am utterly incapable of subduing my abnormal passions and my rebellious sense-organs, the diseases that flesh is heir to eat into the very marrow of my bones; my mind is ever running after the pleasures of this world and would never turn to Thee; and, my speech is defiled by untruth and harshness.’

‘Thus I am destitute of all virtues and utterly unworthy of Thy holy servitude. I am like

“An infant crying in the night
An infant crying for the light
And with no heart but a cry.”

‘Have pity on me, then, O Thou All-merciful and let thy mercy save a creature who is being continually tossed about in the ocean of this life of miseries.’

‘Forgive my sins, O Lord, Ocean of Mercy as Thou art,—my sins which are beyond all reckoning and unpardonable in their very nature.’

‘O All-excellent God of gods, kindly forgive the foolish acts of a foolish creature. All-powerful and All-forgiving as Thou art, an all-foolish and all-ignorant creature like me is the best object of Thy mercy and forgiveness.’

“Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in truth ;
And in Thy wisdom make me wise.”

(Tennyson—In Memoriam.)

‘My sins are defects of my blood ; they have their origin in my ignorance, weakness, and my ill-nature which is constantly brooding over evil thoughts. All these sins deserve Thy pardon, seeing that I have now surrendered myself absolutely to Thy mercy.

‘O Destroyer of all dangers, O Almighty Lord, kindly forgive all my sins, the sins which I have been committing day and night. Cp.

"Forgive what seemed my sin in me ;
What seemed my worth since I began ;
For, merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

(Tennyson—In Memoriam).

'My sins are threefold in their nature, mental, vocal and physical, and they have their roots in my error and illusion. I am accustomed to them from the very beginning. I commit them at all times and by thousands and in so doing I always ignore Thy Omnipresence. Forgive all my sins, O Lord, out of Thy Absolute Mercy.' Cp.

"I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure."

(Tennyson—Passing of Arthur).

CHAPTER V.

The Function of the Lord's devotees—their importance and position in the sphere of self-reformation.

The foregoing lines give us some idea of the attitude of a man who has learnt Absolute Resignation. Absolute Resignation and Absolute Grace are correlative terms. Absolute Grace reveals itself in the form of the Saviour. In other words, as the immediate result of Absolute Grace we meet with our Saviour, who shows us the path to eternal heaven, who takes upon himself all our sins and who reconciles us to God. When our conscience awakes and

when we come to feel that we have been so long rebellious souls and when we cry to heaven for mercy, God immediately comes to our help in the form of a godly man whose duty consists in helping us in being reconciled to our Heavenly Father. Such a godly man is called a Saviour. The original Saviour lives in the heart of the Lord's devotees, and it is these latter that are the present and immediate Saviours of mankind.

“ Strong son of God, Immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face
By faith and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.”

(*Tennyson—In Memoriam*).

These lines teach us that we that have not seen the face of the Saviour embrace Him by faith and faith alone, and that so far as his miraculous acts are concerned, we are only to *believe* what we can not *prove*. And as the Lord's devotees have implicit and firm faith in the Saviour, it is very easy to approach the latter through the former. Our faith is very often dry and very often we are found to be wanting in faith altogether. It would be better for us, therefore, to seek the help of the Lord's devotees who would readily re-concile us to the Saviour. The Saviour is styled as our Acharyya (Cp. “आचार्यस्तु हरिः साक्षात् चरुपौ न संशयः”—again “आचार्यं मां विजानीयात्” &c. *Sruti*) and six things are absolutely necessary for a man to enable him to meet with his Saviour. 1, Love of

God. 2. Providential Virtue i. e., virtuous acts performed by a man under the guidance of Providence. 3. Absolute Grace of God. 4. The state of being absolutely free from jealousy. 5. Advancing continually towards God. 6. Communion or Intercourse with the Lord's devotees. Thus.

“ईश्वरस्य च सौहार्दं यदृच्छासुक्रतं तथा ।

विष्णोः कटाक्षं महेषः आभिमुख्यं च सात्त्विकैः ।

सम्भाषणं षडेतानि आचार्यप्राप्तिहेतवः ॥”

(सुसुक्ष्मपट्टी—*Commentaries thereof by Vara-Vara Muni Swami.*)

The six successive steps that lead us immediately to our Saviour are the following :—

1. ईश्वरस्यःसौहार्दं or Love of God or Intimacy with God.

2. यदृच्छा सुक्रतं=यादृच्छिकी, प्रासंगिकी सुक्रति or Virtuous acts performed by a man unconsciously and merely under the guidance of Providence.

3. विष्णोः कटाक्षं or Absolute Grace of the All-pervading God.

4. महेषः or Absolute Freedom from Jealousy or Envy.

5. आभिमुख्यं or Perpetual Advancement Towards God.

6. सात्त्विकैः सम्भाषणं or Frequent Communion with the Lord's devotees.

* The one leads to the other.

These six things are the immediate cause of a man's Attainment of the Saviour (आचार्यप्राप्तिहेतवः). In other words, they lead us to our Acharyya or Saviour.

From the above passage it is evident that communion with the Lord's devotees (सात्विकैः सभाषणं) is the immediately next step towards the attainment of the Saviour.

As the Saviour dwells in the heart of all true servants of the Lord, He is called the Holy Spirit by some people. It signifies very little, however, by what name we call Him. It is enough for us to remember that we can be saved only through the mediation of the Lord's devotees, who would uproot our old habits and teach us how to acquire good and useful habits. Our old habits only strengthened our attachment for a sinful life, whereas the new habits show us the shortest approach to Heaven and teach us how to meet with our Heavenly father at the nearest future. The Lord's devotees therefore, are the direct mediators between the Saviour and the sinners, and also, the indirect mediators between God and the sinners. Their number is very limited. But they do exist everywhere and they are always at our service. Thus,

“सर्वत्र खलु वर्तन्ते साधवो दीनवत्सला”

(*Idem*).

Men do not see them simply because they do not require their services. Men are anxious only for the

pleasures of this life and of this world; and, as such, they seek the company of those only who would help them best in attaining their earthly objects. The Lord's devotees, on the other hand, would always teach us how to forget for ever the fleeting shows and fascinations of this world and always keep in view the glories of Heaven. They would teach us that the true mission of our life is the servitude of the Lord, that so long as we live on this earth we are to pass our days in doing only such acts as would please Heaven most, and when we quit this world for good we are to serve the Lord in Heaven. That is to say, eternal servitude of Heaven in this life as well as in the life to come is the very essence of our being.

“दासभूताः स्वयः सर्व्वे ह्यात्मानः परमात्मनः ।

नान्यथा लक्षणं तेषां वन्द्ये मोक्षे च विद्यते ॥”

This great lesson is being constantly inculcated on our minds by the Lord's devotees. They would draw us away and away from our sins, lead us nearer and nearer to God and teach us how to lead a godly life. They would convert sinners into saints. But we sinners are grown so much accustomed to our sins that we always like the company of the sinners and keep ourselves at a safe distance from the Lord's devotees. The path that we follow is diametrically

परन्दपड़ी—A sacred manuscript in Tamil by one of the Purvacharyyas.

This sloka has been cited before and shown to be a quotation from the Commentaries on the रहस्यत्रय by Vara-Vara-Muni Swami. See p. 17. It occurs, however, in most of the Tamil MSS., one of which is परन्दपड़ी ।

opposed to that followed by the Lord's devotees. Our path leads us to eternal hell, theirs to eternal heaven. The former takes us farther and farther away from our Father, the latter brings us to Him at once and unites us with Him in such a way as to dread no separation. As the two paths are opposed to each other, it is only natural that we sinners never come across the saints and sages. But, whenever we turn to them and pray for their help, we find them at hand and at our service and ready to help us in every way.

Saints and sages send up their ceaseless prayers to Heaven that they may have the pleasure of enjoying the blessed company of the Lords devotees even in the form of an insect in their holy abodes. The Saint Yámanacharyya who flourished in Southern India some ten centuries ago thus sings in his "Hymn of Hymns" or आनन्दार *

“तवदास्यसुखैकसंगिनां, भवनेष्वपि कीटजन्म मे ।

इतरावसथेषु मास्मभूदपि मे जन्म चतुर्मुखात्मना ॥”

“O Lord, I would always pray that I may be born even as one of the insects that dwell in the houses of the Lord's devotees, rather than as a Lord Paramount of this universe, or the Four-faced Brahma.”

And why does the Saint seek the life of an insect in the house of the Lord's devotees? Simply because anyone, whether a beast, a man or a bird, connected in any way with the Lord's devotees, is sure to be saved by the Lord and ascend the highest heaven by virtue of that connection only.

* Al-mandár is the Tamil name of this excellent Hymn.

“पशुर्मनुष्यः पक्षी वा ये च वैष्णवसंश्रयाः ।

तेनैव ते प्रयास्यन्ति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥”

(श्रीवचनभूषण by Lokacharyya Swami)

Even immovable objects like trees and others are saved by virtue of their relationship with the Lord's devotees, for, “whomsoever the Lord's devotee may chance to cast his sacred glance upon, or to lay his holy hands upon is sure to be saved by the Lord even though he may be no better than an immovable object like a tree, not to say of those whom he calls his friends.” Thus,

“यं यं सृशति पाणिभ्यां यं यं पश्यति चक्षुषा ।

स्यावराण्यपि मुच्यन्ते किं पुनर्वान्मवाजनाः ॥”

(Idem)

If we be so fortunate as to gain the favour of one of these Lord's devotees, we are sure to find in him a guardian angel to shield us from all dangers whatever. Even if we happen to be far away from him, we shall feel that we are being constantly protected by his blessings. “The Lord's devotees foster and nourish their favourites even as the fish, the tortoise, and the bird develop their respective eggs.”

“दर्शनध्यान संस्पर्शात् मत्स्य कूर्म विहङ्गमाः ।

पुष्पन्ति स्वान्यपत्यानि तथैवाचार्यसत्तमाः ॥”

(Commentaries on रहस्यत्रय by Vedanti Swami).

A fish hatches its eggs with its eyes only ; it would look on and on its eggs till they are hatched. In this instance, it is the visual organ that is the developing agency. A tortoise hatches her eggs with

her mind only. She would lay her eggs somewhere, very carefully of course, and then go far away from them. From that distance she would think of them,—think on and on till they would be hatched. Here, it is the mental organ that is the developing agency. In the case of the bird, it is the organ of touch that is the developing agency. She would sit on and on her eggs till they would be hatched. Similarly, the Lord's devotee nourishes and develops his young favourites sometimes by looking kindly and affectionately on them with his sacred glance, sometimes by laying his holy hands upon their heads and thus blessing them, and, when far away from them, by praying for them in his mind, and thus invoking the blessings of God upon them. He protects his favourites in every way.

Thus we see that if we be so fortunate as to win the favour of anyone of the Lord's devotees, we are sure to be saved from all dangers. For, he would always protect us like a guardian angel. Unfortunately, however, we never pray to heaven for such a guardian to protect us. We are so busy with the trivial objects of the world that we never turn to Heaven; we never repent for our sins; we never ask for his Grace; we never think of the destiny that awaits us, and we have virtually no connection whatever with the Lord and his devotees. We are wasting a precious life in doing nothing.

Principal Fairburn thus expresses the feelings of everyone who reflects seriously on life :—

“Man has noble instincts and impulses that impel him to seek the true, to admire the lovely, to worship the good, to feel after and find the Infinite Perfection in which the true and right and beautiful blend into a divine and personal unity. Man has deep moral convictions of rights that are his due, of duties that he owes, of an eternal law he is bound to discover and obey. Man has sad and remorseful experiences, the sense of unfulfilled duties, of wasted hours, of sorrows that have turned the anticipated joys of his life into utter miseries, of mean and unmanly sins against conscience and heart, against man and God, of losses unredeemed by gain, of the lonely anguish that comes in the hour of bereavement and throws across life a shadow that no sunshine can pierce. And out of these mingling instincts and impulses, convictions and experiences, rise man's manifold needs, those cravings after rest, those gropings after a strong hand to hold and trust, those cries for pardon, those unutterable groanings after light shed from a Divine face upon his gloom, in which lie at once the greatness and misery of man.”

In the above lines, Principal Fairburn speaks of our “gropings after a strong hand to hold and trust.” Such a helping hand is always offered to us and always ready to save us from all dangers whenever we cry for it and whenever we turn to Heaven for Mercy. The ears of the all-merciful Lord are always open to the softest cry for help and his all protecting hands are ever ready to relieve the distress of the wretched sinner who cries for pardon. Whenever we are in

distress and pray for Divine help, the Lord immediately deposes his devotees to save us from our dangers. He always lives in the heart of His devotees (for, 'the upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell') and he always urges them on to help those who cry for His Mercy.

CHAPTER VI.

The Duties which must be performed by a devoted Servant of the Lord.

It has been said that whenever we turn to Heaven, repent bitterly for our past life and cry for Mercy, praying fervently to the Lord kindly to save us from the temptations of this world, the All-merciful Father readily comes to us in the form of one of His devoted Servants, who gradually leads us on and on to the path of virtue and finally unites us with our Heavenly Father for ever. He would at once initiate us into the duties, the regular performance of which converts a sinner into a saint. An exhaustive list of these duties will be detailed in this chapter.

He who wants to become a devoted servant of the Lord must be very regular in the performance of those duties that are absolutely binding on him. These duties are nothing more than the purificatory acts that purify his body and soul by bringing all his sense-organs to the right path. He has abused his

sense-organs by allowing them to turn away from God. They now require to be turned to Him in order that they may be rightly used. Thus,

“भगवद् वहिर्मुखस्थितेन्द्रियवर्गस्य ईश्वराभिमुखी करणम्” ।

(वेदार्थसारसंग्रह by Ramanuja).

The purification of the ten sense-organs and of the mind, or, the purification of our करणत्रय (karanattraya) or of the three instruments of our actions, namely, the mind, the body and speech, is of paramount importance and the Primary Duty of his life. The purification of self means the purification of these three sides of the human nature.

This purification of the three phases of our nature is effected by the regular and steady practice of those virtues that are essential to a devoted servant of the Lord. Our nature has been rotten to the core by following a systematic course of actions altogether unworthy of and uncongenial to our nature. And to restore it to its native grandeur we need only practise those great virtues that purify our heart and make it the favourite abode of God. For, as Novalis and Carlyle have it, the upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell. So the performance of the following purificatory acts is indispensable to purify the heart and to make a man a truly devoted servant of the Lord, namely,

“तापः पुण्ड्रः तथा नाम मन्त्रो यागश्चपञ्चम ।

अमीह पञ्चसंस्काराः परमैकान्तिहेतवः ॥”

(अष्टादशरहस्य by Ramanuja)

That is to say,

1. Bitter repentance for our sins and cry for Mercy.

2. Seeking divine protection against the temptations of the Devil.

3. The noble ambition of earning a name worthy of a true servant of the Lord and of being counted as one of his holy and devoted servants.

4. The holy thoughts and ideas which we should always cherish in our mind, which banish all evil thoughts from our mind and thus save us from the sins of the day.

5. The sacred routine of life which will keep us far above the high water-mark of the world's contempt and ridicule and beyond the reach of the miseries of this world. In other words, a routine of life which is calculated to make us lead a supremely happy and blessed life here as well as in the next world.

Let us now analyse each of these five purifying agencies separately and see what they really mean.

I. The First Purification :—

Bitter repentance for the past sinful life and then to become strong in the Armour of God :—Cp. "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day." (The Bible—Ephesians VI, 13). The Armour of God alluded to in the passage quoted above refers to the defensive arms to stand against the Devil, which are thus enumerated by Paul, the Apostle, in his Epistle to the Ephesians :—(1) The Girdle of Truth (2) the

Breast-plate of Righteousness (3) The Shield of Faith (4) the Helmet of Salvation (5) The Sword of the Spirit and (6) the Shoes of Peace.

The Saints and sages of Southern India think of God as holding in His hands the *Pāñchajanya Sankha* or the Holy Conch, and the *Sudarsana Chakra* or the thousand-spoked wheeled instrument to defend and shield His men from all harms and dangers. God himself needs no arms to defend His own person. But He is always armed cap-à-pie to defend His devotees from the attacks of the Devil. The sound of the sacred Shell, *Panchajanya* (पांचजन्यशङ्खः), rends the hearts of the demons whose wicked design is only to give trouble to the saints and other favourites of God, and the supernaturally sharp edged sacred wheel, the Holy *Sudarasana* (सुदर्शनचक्रम्) is ever busy in cutting to pieces the enemies of God's men and attendants. The sacred function of these two arms of God is to protect His men from dangers of all kinds. The Lord's devotees, therefore, bear the Badge of the Lord, these two armorial bearings—the Sacred Shell and the Wheel, simply to be reminded of the great truth that the Lord is ever anxious to shield His men from all injuries. “Be strong in the Armour of God” is the motto of all godly men and the ethical significance of representing the Lord as holding His arms ready to destroy all the enemies of His devotees is to make His devotees feel that they are always strong in the Armour of God. We should always bear in mind the esoteric meaning of representing the Lord as holding

the Holy Wheel and the Sacred Shell in His Hands. The Wheel reminds the Lord's devotees that they have no fear whatever of being ground down in the wheels of Fortune and in the wheels of Time and that they are not at all subject to the laws of Time and Fortune. They are the devoted Servants of the Lord at all times, in all places and under all circumstances, and they consider themselves to be extremely fortunate in being blessed with the servitude of the Lord. As such, the ordinary laws of Time and Fortune have no hold on them. Cp.

“सर्वेषु देशकालेषु सर्वावस्थासु चाच्युत ।

किंकरोऽस्मि हृषीकेश भूयोभूयोऽस्मि किंकरः ॥”

(इति श्रीपञ्चरात्रागमे महोपनिषदि ब्रह्मतन्त्रे श्रीमदष्टाक्षरकण्ठे जितन्त्रेस्तोत्रे चतुर्थाध्याये पञ्चदश श्लोकः) ।

The sacred shell, on the other hand, reminds the Lord's devotees that they have nothing to fear from the false charges that are continually being brought against them by the followers of the Devil. The awful and solemn sound of the sacred shell silences the voice of all opposition and rends the heart of the enemies of the men of God. The voice of God coming through the Conch causes the cunning serpents to recoil and hide their faces whenever they dare to stifle the dictates of pure morality by the fire of their own words. Milton has tried to give us a graphic picture of the attempts of Comus, the wicked follower of the Devil, to cause the virtuous lady to listen to his fallacious arguments. But the lady was

strong in the armour of God and was a proof against the attacks of the wicked monster.

“If virtue weak were, Heaven itself
Would stoop to her.”

(*Milton's Comus*)

are the concluding words of consolation uttered by the great poet of England. Milton's Comus is the type of the followers of Satan who are ever trying to entice Virtue and win her over to their side by a flood of irresistible arguments. She is however so strongly protected by Heaven that she successfully exposes the fallacy of all those arguments and shows to them the infinitely superior strength of her own position.

The sacred shell of the Lord symbolically represents the solemn sound of the Voice of God that bears down all opposition and silences the sinners who are never ceasing in their attempts to bring false charges against the followers of the Lord.

The above paragraph gives the esoteric significance of the symbolism or the representation of the Lord as holding the holy wheel and the sacred shell in His hand. We now understand the meaning of the first purifying agency, namely, “**ताप**.” Self-reformation requires that the reformer should in the first place bear the armorial bearings of the Lord, that is, the roots of both of his arms should be marked with the figures of the sacred shell Panchajanya and the holy wheel Sudarsana to remind him that he is a devoted servant of the Lord and that as such he is free from

the fear of being ground down in the wheels of Fortune and Time and also from the fear of being crushed down by the weight of false charges that are ever being brought against him by the enemies of the Lord's devotees.

II The Second Purification :—

We now come to the Second Purifying Agency, namely, Pundra (पुण्ड्र), or Protection against the temptations of the Devil.

2. Particular parts of the body should be held as the seat of particular manifestations of the Divinity. The forehead, for instance, is the seat of God as manifested in the form of Kesava, or a Protector of His protege (ललाटे केशवं ध्यायेत्). The forehead, therefore, should be regarded as the favourite abode of the Lord in His manifestation as (केशवः) Kesava. Cp.

“केशवाः पुरुषाः लोके येषां हृदि न केशवः ।

केशवार्पितसर्वस्वाः न श्वाः न पुनर्भवाः ॥”

i.e., “Which are those persons that are actually dead though living? They are those persons in whose heart the Lord Kesava does not dwell. And those that have resigned themselves absolutely to Him, those who move and live and have their being’ in Him (i. e. in the Lord Kesava) are neither dead nor destined to be born again. The Lord in His manifestation of Kesava, i. e. protector of His protege, or, the Lord who is ever thoughtful of protecting those who seek His protection, should be thought of as protecting the forehead from all wicked thoughts.

(Cp. Sin originated from the forehead of Satan). The Sanskrit quotations on this subject are all taken from *Narayana Sara Sangraha* (नारायणसार संग्रह) by a distinguished saint of Southern India.

The belly is the seat of the Lord in His manifestation as Narayana (Cp. “नारायणमयोदरे”—*Idem*) or support of the universe ; the breast of Madhava or the Lord of Lakshmi, the universal mother (“वत्स्यले माधवंच”) ; the throat of Govinda or the Giver of all delight (“गोविन्दं कण्ठकूबरे”) ; the right side is the seat of Vishnu, the All-pervading God who is the Preserver of all (“विष्णुश्च दक्षिणे कुक्षौ”) ; the right arm of Madhusudana or the destroyer of all dangers (“बाह्वीच मधुसूदनम्”) ; the right shoulder of the Lord Trivikrama, the Mighty Lord who in three strides measures the three worlds—the abode of the blessed immortals, the region of the mortals and the region of the nether world (“त्रिविक्रमं कन्धरे तु”) ; the left side, of the Lord Vamana, or the all-kind and all-affectionate Father who sees that His good sons may not in any way be disturbed by His wicked and rebellious sons (“वामनं वाम पार्श्वके”) ; the left arm is the seat of the Lord Sridhara, the Lord who combines in Himself all the good graces and blessings and who showers them with a lavish hand upon His devotees (“श्रोधरं वामबाह्वी तु”) ; the left shoulder of the Lord and Guide of the sense-organs and of the mind i.e. of the Lord Hrishikesa (“हृषीकेशं तु कन्धरे”) ; the back is the seat of the Lord Padmanabha or the Original Fountainhead of the creative power (“पृष्ठे तु पद्मनाभं च”) ; the neck of the Lord Dāmodāra or the

Almighty and All-independent Lord, who however is always dependent upon His devotees and whose will is always subservient to the will of His servants, ("त्रिके दामोदरं न्यसेत्"). And, finally, the head is to be thought of as the seat of Vāsudeva or God who dwells everywhere ("वासुदेवेति सूर्ध्वनि").

Here, no less than thirteen manifestations of the Divinity are contemplated of and the Holy Feet of the Saviour is thought of as being imprinted on the particular parts of the body alluded to above, like so many precious ornaments which lend a grace to the body, and, as protecting them from all harms and injuries contemplated of by the partisans of Satan.

The ethical and esoteric significance of the thing is that the Divine attributes, which are brought to our mind when we contemplate that particular parts of our body is the seat of particular manifestation of the Divinity, only serve to purify our heart, which after all, is the favourite and the true abode of the Lord. And, when we remember that God dwells in our heart, we are inspired with fresh courage, fresh energy, and fresh hopes which enable us to overcome the temptations of the Devil against which we are to wage a life-long struggle.

Moral courage does not consist in charging atilt against all that seems to us to be wrong in our neighbours. We have our own enemies to fight. For instance, pride, evil-speaking, malice, lust, anger, envy, covetousness, illusion and the like,—enemies who never slumber and who can only be subdued by

constant watchfulness and a never-flagging zeal. Victory must begin at home and we have so many powerful enemies to fight that we have hardly any leisure to think of the errors and defects in others and find fault with them. A great moral courage is necessary to combat successfully against those ever-recurring vices that are every moment dragging us to our ruin.

And, how can we acquire this moral courage? We can acquire it simply by turning to our heart and seeing there the Lord seated in all glory, the Lord who shields us constantly against all our dangers. When we feel that we are always being protected by Him from all evils whatsoever, we find ourselves safe and secure even as a child in the bosom of its mother. It is this sense of security and it is this consciousness of the presence of the Almighty in our heart that supply us with unusual moral courage and enable us to withstand all temptations whatever. He dwells in our heart and it is He alone Who by His Absolute Grace saves us from our sins. But, then, it is to be borne in mind that we must always be conscious of the presence of our All-protecting Father in our heart. So long as we are conscious of Him we are all safe. But the moment we forget him, we find ourselves in the midst of hell fire.

Cp.

मार्कण्डेय उवाच ।

“सा हानि द्वाभ्यश्छिद्रं सा भ्रान्ति सा ज्ञ विक्रिया ।

यन्मुहूर्त्तं क्षणं वापि वासुदेवं न चिन्तयेत् ॥”

From this couplet it is evident that our greatest loss, greatest error, greatest disfigurement and the greatest opportunity that we afford Satan to possess us, is when we forget the Omnipresent Lord. This forgetfulness is the cause of all our miseries. And the only means of escaping the miseries of this world is to remember the Lord at all times everywhere and under all circumstances and to pray to Him fervently that He may help us in carrying out His best wishes.

In order that we may never forget the Lord, we must always think of the Divine attributes and the glories of the Lord. We think of particular parts of our body as being the particular Seat of a special manifestation of the Divinity, simply because we are reminded of the infinite kindness, infinite goodness, infinite affection, infinite care, infinite love, infinite tenderness and the infinite other good graces of the Lord who dwells in our heart. We feel how close He is to us, how accessible to all, and how very anxious He always is to reclaim us, and how ready He is to forgive all our sins, unpardonable though they be in their very nature, to receive us once more unto His favour and to shower all His blessings upon us.

We now understand fully the ethical significance of the second purifying agency. How it purifies our soul by ever reminding us of the presence of the Lord within us.

III. The Third Purification:—

3. Let us now turn to the third purifying agency, namely, the noble ambition of earning a name worthy

of a true servant of the Lord—a Dásyanáma (दास्यनाम) or Tirunámam (तिरु नामम्) as it is called in Tamil.

A man had once the good fortune of going to the Deccan and visiting there the most important place, the seat of learning and the seat of saints. When there, one day an old venerable looking gentleman thus accosted him. “Tiru namam ? तिरु नामम्) *i.e.* “May I ask you your blessed name?” The stranger at first failed to understand the meaning of the question, for the epithet “blessed” puzzled him. He had a name no doubt ; but was it a “blessed” name ? This thought threw him into anxiety, and, for a while he returned no answer. But, when the old man repeated the same question again, his venerable appearance commanded such respect, the words he uttered were so solemm in their tone, so sweet and affectionate, and, above all, his manners were so graceful that the stranger could no longer keep silent. He mechanically uttered something, which, however, fortunately for him, proved to be the right answer. He had two names ; one, by which he was popularly known, and the other, which was given to him by his own affectionate spiritual preceptor. The venerable appearance and the simple and familiar manners of the old man recalled to the mind of the stranger the image of his own affectionate preceptor and he involuntarily and unconsciously answered the question put to him by the old gentleman by uttering the name given to him by his own preceptor instead of giving out that by which he was ordinarily known

to all. And, he had returned the right answer. For, the epithet "blessed" prefixed to the word "name" signifies that the man who has a "blessed name" has become the object of Divine favour inasmuch as he has been favoured by his own spiritual preceptor with a term of endearment to signify that he is really very dear to his preceptor. And, when a man is so fortunate as to become the special object of affection and favour of his godly and venerable spiritual preceptor, he is sure to be blessed by God also. The spiritual preceptor, properly so called, stands in the position of the Saviour himself. Very naturally, therefore, he deserves to be served in a spirit of unflinching devotion. It is our first and last duty to show him every respect and attention and always regard him and remember him with reverence, awe, and veneration. When we serve him with all our heart, God is served and when we please him, we please God himself. If, therefore, a man serve his spiritual preceptor with unswerving devotion and undivided attention and succeed in pleasing him so much as to become the object of his special favour, the mission of his life is fulfilled and the end of his existence is achieved. His preceptor, then, calls him his own, gives him a name of endearment and showers upon him his choicest blessings. The name by which he is affectionately called by his preceptor is, therefore, very aptly said to be "a blessed name." For, he is blessed alike by God, by his preceptor, and by all good men.

The third purifying agency, then, is the invaluable

able possession of "the blessed name." It is called a "Dasyanāma" (दास्यनाम) inasmuch as it is the result of a devoted practice of the doctrines of Divine servitude and acquired after repeated trials. Such a name preserves the moral integrity of our nature and acts as a powerful protection against the danger of yielding ourselves to the temptations of flesh and blood, by reminding us constantly that servitude of God and of godly persons is the very essence of our being and the end of our existence, that a life of spotless purity is inconsistent with any attachment for the trivial objects of this world, and that man is man only by virtue of his victory over his animal nature and only by virtue of the sway of Conscience in all the actions of his life. The noblest ambition of our life should be directed towards the attainment of the honourable distinction of being called a 'Servant of the Lord.' How often has a good name saved a man from the current sins of the day by setting before him a high ideal of life, which unconsciously lures him away and away from all lusts and temptations of this world and urges him on and on towards the goal of his ambition, and how often has it served as a beacon house to warn him of the Scylla and Charybdis which have only too often engulfed unwary and unsuspecting ships steering across the ocean of this life.

* The noble thought of being counted as one of the Servants of the Lord inspires into the mind the hope of our being born anew, the hope of our being dead to the associations which cause us to be ever alive to the ignoble objects of this life, the hope of raising

ourselves in the estimation of all good men and of being ranked among the favourites of Heaven and this acquiring a name so blessed in its nature as to purify our whole being. Nothing can be a more worthy object of our ambition than to have a holy name—a name of endearment which proclaims to the world that we are being dearly regarded by Heaven and the heavenly beings.

CHAPTER VII.

IV. The Fourth Purifying Agency.

We now come to the fourth *Samskara* or Purificatory Act, namely, *Mantra* (मन्त्रः). It is so called because it redeems and saves the man who cherishes *in his mind the holy thought concealed in it. Thus

“मन्तारं मनुसंख्यातारं चायते इति मन्त्रः”

(सुसुक्षुपड़ी *Múmukshúpadi* by *Vara-Vara-Muni Swami*).

We should always bear in mind that the Holy Mantras are not meaningless words, but, they are the very essence of the holy thoughts and feelings cherished by the holiest of the Lord's devotees. The *Pranava* (प्रणवः), for instance, is the very essence of the whole Veda. The Vedas only aim at the solution of the five greatest problems of life, or the *Artha*

Panchaka Vijnana (पञ्चकविज्ञान), as this solution is called. Thus,

“प्राप्यस्व ब्रह्मणो रूपं, प्राप्तुश्च प्रत्यगात्मनः ।
 प्राप्त्यपायं फलं प्राप्तेः तथा प्राप्तिविरोधौ च ॥
 वदन्ति सकलाः वेदाः सेतिहास पुराणगाः ।
 मुनयश्च महात्मानः वेदवेदांग पारगाः ॥”

“*Artha Panchaka*”—one of the “*Pancha-Rahasyas*”
 by *Lokacharyya Swami*)

i. e. “The Srutis, the Smritis, the Itihasas, the Puranas, the Munis, the Saints and those that are masters of the Vedas and the Vedangas all say unanimously the same five things—their drift is the same, namely, the solution of the five greatest problems of life which are thus enumerated,

1. The Essence of God, the Goal.
2. The Essence of the finite Beings, who are running the race of life.
3. The Means by which the runners may reach the Goal (God).
4. The Result of Reaching the Goal (God).
5. The Obstacles in the way to the Goal (God).

It is the solution of these five problems which forms the sum and substance of the Vedas, the Smritis, the Itihasas and the Puranas. And the Munis and Mahatmas or the Saints and Sages and the Masters of Arts and Sciences all sing the same great truth. The aim, the drift and the theme of them all is the solution of the five greatest problems of life. So that, when we say that the *Pranava*

(प्रणव) is the very essence of the whole Veda we mean that the Pranava also contains in it the solution of the same problems and when we sing the Pranava we only sing the solution of the solemn problems of life. *Ipso facto*, then, the Mantra, Pranava, is a very holy thing containing only holy ideas and, as such, it should not be regarded as an inanity or an array of mere idle words.

We see now the ethical significance of the fourth purifying Agency which initiates us into the holiest of all Mantras, the Pranava. When we sing the Pranava we only sing the solemn truths underlying the word. For, the Pranava is the essence of the Eight-lettered Mantra, which, in its turn, is the essence of all the Vedas, the Vedas which are the embodiment of all the Truths. Thus,

“सर्वार्थाः वेदगर्भस्थाः, वेदाष्टाक्षरे स्थिताः ।

अष्टाक्षरस्तु प्रणवे ह्यकारे प्रणवः स्थितः ॥”

(*Rahasyattraya* (रहस्यत्रय) by *Loka-Desika-Swami*
लोकदेशिक स्वामी)

The Fourth element in the Panchasamskara Ceremony, then, inaugurates the thoughts and feelings of the Lord's devotees. When we are roused to a sense of duty by the awakening of our Conscience, when we feel that we have been so long wasting a precious life, when we repent bitterly for the past, when our sins are washed off by the tears of repentance and when we acquire a new life, the first thought that crosses our mind is, How to be re-

conciled to our Heavenly Father? Rebellious sons that we are, how are we to approach Him? We are reminded of the gravity of our offences and how very troublesome we have proved ourselves to be to Him. We feel that the very serious nature of our offence will not allow us to approach our Father, and, even if we do approach Him at all, we feel that He will not pardon us readily and that our prayer for Absolute Pardon and Absolute Grace is not likely to be heard. Even if our repentance be very bitter and sincere, He would, at least, wait for sometime in order to be perfectly convinced that our repentance is deep and permanent in its nature and not merely superficial and momentary. And, inasmuch as we have been rebellious for an indefinitely long period, our Father in his tender solicitude for the welfare of His sons may also very naturally postpone judgment and sentence for an equally indefinite and long period simply to see us reformed and reclaimed permanently. Should we then continue to be penitent and wait on and on patiently till He is moved at the sight of our miseries? We should; but, we cannot and we dare not. We feel that our nature is corrupted to the very core of our being and that as such we are in danger of reverting to our former sinful life every moment and that there is every likelihood of our sins recurring unless we are providentially made proof against all attacks of the Devil. So much afraid are we of the temptations of the Devil that we become impatient to find shelter in a place where we may be beyond the reach of our moral and spiritual

enemies. Such a place of shelter is undoubtedly the Holy Feet of the Lord, but we find it to be barred against us owing to our being rebellious souls. Meanwhile, we are being hotly pursued by our never relenting enemy, the Devil, who is fiercely and constantly crying out to us "Perdition catch your souls !" What then are we to do at this crisis ? Our repeated cry for Mercy is not responded to simply because it does not reach Heaven at all. And, how can we make our cries reach our Father ? We are unable to find any solution of this difficult problem. Still, we never cease to cry for Mercy ; we cry again and again and all the more piteously. Luckily, however, a very pleasing and hopeful idea flashes in our mind at this juncture. We are suddenly reminded of our Divine Mother and we suddenly hit upon the idea of winning the favour of our Divine Father through the mediation of our ever-affectionate Divine Mother. The problem, "How can we make our cry for Mercy reach our Father ?" which seemed insoluble so long now solves of itself. Our Divine Mother would convey our cries for Mercy to our Divine Father and compel Him to respond to them. Although a rebellious son has no chance of being readily received by his father, he has every chance of being received affectionately by his mother who is never unrelenting like his father. For, it is said

"कुपुत्रो जायेत क्वचिदपि कुमाता नो भवति"

However wicked a son may be, he is always dear to his mother ; and he has always free access to her

when he has no access whatever to his father.. A son may be the very image of the Devil. Nevertheless, to the mother, he would always appear to be Innocence personified and she would never cease to be kind and affectionate to him. Rather, she would be infinitely more partial to such a son. Should a long-rebellious son ever choose to return to his mother, she would readily forgive him all his faults and she would be so importunate in her requests to her husband to receive the son once more into his favour, she would plead so eloquently and successfully in behalf of her child that the father would be moved at once, forget and forgive all his faults and be once more happy to reclaim a child that has been so long lost to him. It is clear, therefore, that although a rebellious son can never make himself heard by his father directly, he can win his favour easily through the mediation of his mother. The mother would always stand between her husband and her son and help to reconcile them to each other. When she is with her husband, she wins him over by her accomplishments, charms and graces and when she is with her child, she corrects it. This dual position of the mother makes her eminently fitted for the almost impossible task of reconciling a rebellious son to his father by standing as a Mediatrix between them.

This peculiar function of the mother as a mediatrix at once encourages us and strengthens us with the hope that we sinners have every chance of winning the favour of our Divine Father through the media-

tion of our Divine Mother. If we bend down before Her lotus-like feet and entreat her to plead on our behalf before our Divine Father, we are sure to be forgiven by Him and received back into His favour.

The Divine Mother, therefore, is always easy of access. We can always approach Her direct without the help of anyone else, and, she herself needs no intervention to have her own children introduced to her. Thus,

“अवाधितं पुरष्कारत्वात् सदैव सुखसेव्या”

(अवचनभूषण—*Sri-vachana-Bhushana* by *Lokachāryya Swami*).

The Divine Mother is very aptly styled as *Sri* (श्रीः) by the followers of the great Ramanuja. The word, according to them, has a sixfold derivation. Thus

“शृणाति निखिलान् दोषान् शृणाति च गुरौ र्जगत् ।

श्रियते चाखिलैर्नित्यं श्रयते च परं पदं ॥

श्रयन्तीं श्रयमाणां च शृणोतीं शृण्वतीमपि ॥”

(इति षोढाव्युत्पन्ना श्रीः शब्दः)

(“अष्टश्लोकी—*Ishta-sloki* by *Bhattaraka Swami*).

From the derivation of the term *Sri* (श्रीः) given above, it would appear that the Divine Mother called *Sri* (श्रीः) has the following functions, namely,

1. She corrects the weaknesses and imperfections of all creatures,
2. She causes their virtues to increase continually. She lends her own charms, graces and accomplishments to the whole world.
3. She affords shelter to all and at all times.

4. God Himself is Her shelter. God always preserves Her in His very heart for the tender solicitude she always betrays for Her weak children and for her helping Him in redeeming them.
5. She is both a supporter and supported—supporter of the universe and supported by the Lord of the universe.
6. She is at once the Appellant and the Appellate Court inasmuch as she hears the appeals of Her children as well as she appeals to God on behalf of Her children.

And, surely, these are virtues which recommend Her to all and specially to God who is proud of being called Her Husband (श्रियः पतिः) and who always holds Her in His heart of hearts with so much tenderness, love and affection as to know no separation. Cf.

“नित्यैव सा प्रिया पद्मी विश्वोर्नित्यानपायिनी ।”

(*Sri Sukti of Bhattaraġa Swami.*)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Divine Mother. Her Function as a Mediatrix between God and all others.

Let us now see a little more closely into the thing, I mean, into the function of the mediatrix.

When a rebellious son repents for his sins and is

anxious to be reconciled to his parents he goes to his mother at first. He knows very well that if he go to his father directly, he would not receive him at all, he would not even so much as look at him, he would rather spurn at him at first. But the case is altogether different with the mother. She would accord a very different treatment altogether even to a rebellious son. Should such a son return to her and ask for her pardon and request her to help him in being reconciled to his father, she would at once receive him into her bosom and bathe him in her tears of affection which flow profusely, for, her joy is unbounded; the son has been reclaimed after an eternity, as it were; the days of separation from her son seemed to her as so many Ages. So that now that she has reclaimed him once more, she considers herself to be very happy—very very happy; the tears of joy gush out in torrents; She covers him with her kisses and heaps all her blessings on him. Also, she advises him not to see his father till she wins his pardon for him and obtains permission for him to see his father.

She now stands as the mediatrix. In the first place, she wins the heart of her husband by her charms and graces. Next, she sings the praises of her husband so sweetly as to have him entirely in her possession. She, then pleads eloquently on behalf of her child which may be put in the form of a dialogue. Thus

Mother—O dearest lord of my life, do you ever remember that you have a child?

Father—Yes, I do. ' But what of him ? He is as good as lost to us for ever, and, the less we think of him anymore the better. For, to think of him is only to make ourselves unhappy.

Mother—True ; but, there is another side of the thing which is still more unpleasant. The conduct of a child is a reflection on the reputation of the father. People would always say, " the son of so and so is such and such." The father is always held responsible for the conduct of the child. Do you not see, therefore, that it is a stain on your spotless name to be called the father of a wicked and rebellious child ?

Father—I do. But there is no help for it. We have done our best to reclaim him. But all our efforts have been of no avail. He would never even come to us. What can we then do for him ?

Mother—But if he do come to you at all, would you like to receive him ? Would you forget and forgive all his faults and treat him with kindness as you used to do before ?

Father—Certainly I would. I should be only too glad to receive him and reclaim him. If he only come to me I shall do everything for him.

Mother :—And would you thank me if I can make him come to you ?

Father :—*Thank* you ? I shall be indebted to you for ever.

Mother :—Do you promise me you would receive him into your favour for good ?

Father ;—I do ; I do promise ; I do more than promise.

The mother is not, however, quite satisfied with this assurance and she wants to be thoroughly convinced that the father is really ready to receive his child with all his faults. She is aware that the faults of the child are too many to be reckoned and too serious to be pardoned ; and that the father, though he is so anxious to see his son today, may turn him out again and only tomorrow for his faults. She, therefore, puts the steadiness of the father to the severest test simply to make herself sure that the promise of the father never more to part with his son is really solemn and sincere. As, when we want to fix a post deep into the mud, we only move it backwards and forwards, again and again, to make it go down and down, till it becomes deep-seated and firm, so, in order to make the father firm in his purpose and promise, the mother gives his nature a rude shock by enumerating in detail the vices of the child and she expatiates on the multiplicity, complexity, and the gravity of the defects of the child. The father, however, proves himself equal to the occasion and says that he does not at all believe in her statements, that the child is

altogether incapable of committing such offences, and that even if they be real, he would tolerate them all and live with his son alone, if not with anyone else.

The mother is now perfectly convinced that the father is really sincere in his promise and she therefore presents the child at once to his father, who receives it with thanks and is united with it for ever. The mother as a mediatrix thus reconciles the rebellious son to his father.

The above consideration reveals a very pleasing and important truth. It gives us an insight into the nature and essence of the attributes of the father as well as of the mother and the part taken by each in the production, growth and development of the child. The father is only the source of the seed. He supplies the seed. The mother is the fertile soil where the seed is sown, where it germinates, grows up and finally bears fruits. The mother, however, has to bear infinite pains in bringing forth, nourishing and developing the child. Her sufferings for ten long months during which the child passes through its embryonic stage, the sufferings of childbirth and the difficulties she has to face in bringing up the child can more easily be conceived than described. Her patience and endurance are put to the severest test when she has to pass through this ordeal and she generally gives evidence that she is an image of both these qualities combined with many others, namely, love, affection, tenderness, care, kindness and the like. The child engrosses all her atten-

tion and she is always in anxiety for the well being of the suckling baby.

The growth and development of a child depend entirely upon the care, affection, and attention of the mother. It is woman alone that can bring up and nourish a child. Man is utterly unfit for the task. Again, the qualities or virtues of a woman far excel those of a man. She is the living fountain, as it were, of all the sweet and tender graces and virtues which are essential to the growth, development and continuity of life. She is the preserver of our life and she is the embodiment of all those qualities that a man can never boast of. The mother, therefore, is infinitely superior to the father in her feminine virtues. She is always approachable direct, while the father is not. We (children) can approach the father only through the mother. We can never approach the father directly specially when we are guilty of any offence. The mother is always partial to her child and blind to the weakness and defects of her child. When the father is angry with his child she would always stand between them and reconcile them to each other. In the function of a mediatrix, therefore, she always shines supreme and in all her native grandeur.

Let us keep this fact always in our view and proceed to the consideration of the important question of our redemption and salvation. We sinners are all guilty children in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. We can therefore never approach Him straight. If we do approach Him at all, it would be of no conse-

quence. He would take no notice of us. But then, if we are anxious of being reconciled to our angry Father in Heaven, let us only seek the protection and help of our Divine Mother. She is always ready to receive all her children even if they be no better than the deadliest of sinners. She would always listen to our miseries with the deepest sympathy, give us the most salutary instructions, impart Her virtues on us, afford shelter to us when we are shelterless, win Her Lord over by Her infinite charms, plead strongly on our behalf and finally reconcile us to him for ever.

The Divine Mother, as a Saviour.

The Divine Mother is, therefore, our Saviour. She is the Mediatrix between God, her Lord, and her sinful children. Even when her rebellious children never think of her, she pleads for them unasked before the Lord and entreats him to reclaim them through His Absolute Grace. A mother is more in anxiety for her unwise children than the father. The Divine Mother, therefore, is the unhappiest of all when she thinks of her infinite children who all need to be redeemed and reclaimed. And how does she reclaim them? She wins the heart of the Lord by her infinite charms and when she feels that the Lord is entirely in her possession, she sings so sweetly the praises and glories of the Lord and rouses the Lord to such a keen consciousness of His countless Divine virtues,—Mercy, Grace, Love, Care and Affection, Goodness and the like—that the Lord becomes completely charmed and impatient to please Her by

promising to fulfil all Her wishes. She, then, shows Her anxious care and tender solicitude for Her rebellious children by praying to the Lord that He may be moved to redeem His children by an act of Absolute Grace only and bring them back to their normal condition, that is, to a condition in which they may enjoy a life of Divine Servitude for ever. Thus

“भगवच्छेषभूतोऽयमात्मा यथा निरवलम्बो न स्यात्, तथा कृपा कर्त्तव्या । तदपि यथा यावदात्मभावो स्यात्तथा कृपा कर्त्तव्या ।”

[This memorable and unparalleled passage is quoted from the Introduction to the “Tiruppavai” “तिरुप्पावै” sung by Srimati Godāmbā (गोदाम्बा) or Andal (आण्डाल) (Tamil name)—the daughter of the great Alvār, Bhattanath (भट्टनाथ) and incarnation of Mahā Lakshmi (महालक्ष्मी)—or, the Incarnation of the Divine Mother simply for the sake of the redemption of the sinful creatures of the whole universe].

This admirable passage reveals the crowning glory of the Divine Mother who prays incessantly to Her Lord to redeem His sinful children by a crowning act of Divine Mercy and Grace only. She sings the glories of Her Lord and rouses Him to a keen consciousness of His Divine virtues—infinite mercy, infinite love, infinite affection, infinite goodness and the like—and then prays to Him to prove His greatness by exercising these great virtues upon His sinful children and by redeeming them and blessing them with His Divine Servitude.

The Indebtedness of the Lord to the Mediatrix or the Divine Mother.

Of all her charms it is this constant prayer of the Divine Mother for the redemption of her sinful children that endears her most to the Lord and He shows His indebtedness to Her by enshrining Her in His very bosom and embracing Her eternally with divine fondness, affection and Love.

Naturally, the mother is the preserver of the child in every way. The Divine Mother is also very naturally the Saviour of Her children. So long as we do not seek Her help and protection we live unfortunate and ungrateful and suffer miseries untold. Thus sings a Saint of Southern India, alluding of course to the Divine Mother and the Divine Father :—

“When my Mother is angry with me, my Father intercedes and pleads on my behalf and pacifies her. Again, when my Father is displeased with me, my Mother shields me from his wrath. How blessed am I to have such a kind Father and such an affectionate Mother. May all creatures be as blessed as I am. May all blessings attend my Mother, my Father and all my brothers and sisters. (*Amen.*)

The Conception of the Divinity both as Father and Mother.

The Vedas proclaim that the Goddess of this universe is the all-glorious and all-excellent wife of the All-pervading God, Vishnu. Thus,

“सखेशानां हि जगतो विश्वपत्नी सनातनी।”

The rationale of this Holy text is fully given in the preceding pages. The diverse good graces of

the Divine Mother proclaim that very aptly She deserves to be called the Goddess of this universe, who preserves and saves the whole universe. She is really and certainly the highest, holiest and the most glorious Goddess of all. The gist of the holy text cited above is that it is not the Divine Father but the Divine Mother who is really the Goddess of the whole universe.

Of Man and Woman, the latter is always said to be the better half. And, the virtues of man are only an image of the virtues and sweet graces of woman. This truth holds equally good in the case of the Divine Father and the Divine Mother. The virtues of the latter far outshine those of the former. This holy idea would be fully expanded in the concluding lines of this chapter. Meanwhile, we are to remember that the Dual conception of the Divinity, both as our Father as well as our Mother is productive of immense good and of important results. The two words "Father" and "Mother" are correlative terms, and there is an inseparable connection between them. To think of the father as apart from the Mother, or, vice versa, to think of the Mother as apart from the Father, is a monstrous incongruity in nature as well as in Logic. If we only think over the subject again and again, it would be evident that the relation between father and mother is so strong and close, and so sacred and natural at the same time that if we think only of one of the two we shall never understand it fully. A thing is thoroughly conceived of only when it is

considered in its entirety. To look upon one side of it only is to have only a partial view of the whole thing. We must turn it over and over again and examine it minutely in all its details to be able to comprehend it fully. The conception of God as father only is therefore naturally incomplete. If we call Him as our Father, naturally we are led to think that there must be some one whom we may call as our Mother. If there be a universal father who is the Lord and the Progenitor of all creatures, there must be a Universal Mother to take care of all His children. The Father is thoroughly incompetent to nurse and nourish His children. That onerous responsibility devolves upon the Mother alone and that peculiarly difficult task can be performed by her alone and by no one else. The bringing up of the child is the business exclusively of the Mother. When we think of the Divine Father and His countless children who are all sinful and rebellious in their very nature, we naturally conclude that God alone, without the help of the Divine Mother is utterly unfit for the work of saving so many sinful children. We can hardly imagine how difficult it is to take care of only one rebellious child. And the task of redeeming so many sinful souls must therefore be infinitely arduous in its very nature, and, if it be at all possible to save them all, it must be the Universal Mother, who alone is really competent, and capable of doing it. We must bear in mind that we are always speaking here of the Father and his children and of the difficulty of saving so many sinful children at the same time. Why not introduce the

other element, Mother, and cut through the Gordian Knot at once? Father, mother and children are all inseparably related to one another and the mother always occupies the middle position between them. If we think of God and His sinful children alone and never think of the Divine Mother, there is always a wide gap left between them. The connecting link would be always found missing. This wide gap can never be filled and this missing link can never be supplied by anyone else except the Divine Mother.

Another awe-inspiring and at the same time very pleasing truth is that the father, in some points, can be corrected by the mother alone. The father himself is never altogether free from his faults and he needs constant correction in respect of them. And it is the mother alone who is capable of correcting him. As on earth, this truth holds good in Heaven also. Though it sounds like a paradox, and though it may seem to be a sacrilege to say so, the Heavenly Father also has His faults which we cannot deny. His fault is the undeniable fact that He is too much independent, He is all uncontrollable, He has no one to take Him to task and call Him to account for His actions, He is the eternal enemy of sins and is therefore impatient of punishing the sinful, He can not tolerate the intolerable vices, He is the father of infinite sinful children and so on. These are the defects of the Lord and they are facts which admit of no doubt or question. In these respects, the Lord needs correction Himself and it is the Divine Mother alone who can really correct

him of all His faults. And how does she do so? The Divine Mother first wins His heart by Her infinite charms, graces and virtues and then she sings so sweetly the infinite glory, praise and perfection of the Lord that He forgets himself altogether and comes so completely within her control that she corrects Him of all the faults enumerated above and compels him to redeem and reclaim her rebellious children by an act of Absolute Grace only.

The Divine Mother, therefore, is the natural saviour of her sinful children. To a truly penitent sinner of this earth, this idea is naturally very pleasing, encouraging, hopeful and very far-reaching in its effects. It is productive of important and very great results in the region of self-reformation. That we have an all-kind, all-forgiving and all-affectionate Divine Mother, who is ever blind to all our weaknesses however unpardonable they may be in their very nature, and who is ever ready to receive us unto Her bosom and who is ever anxious of uniting us with our Heavenly Father in such a way as to know no separation is an idea so pleasing, hopeful and encouraging to a penitent sinner that it hardly finds a parallel anywhere.

And, how does the Divine Mother reconcile us to our Divine Father? It has already been answered above and only a word is necessary to add that the Divine Mother is never satisfied till she is perfectly convinced that the Lord has really received His children back into His favour with all their faults and vices and that for ever.

Completely won over by the charms and graces of the Divine Mother when Her Lord promises to redeem her penitent children and when He actually receives them back into His favour, she puts His constancy and firmness to the severest test by enumerating in detail the countless sins of her children and she expatiates on their weaknesses and imperfections. The Lord, then, thus answers her :—

“मम दासाः एवं न कुर्वन्ति, कुर्येत् कुर्वन्तु नाम”

(*Rahasyattraya*)

i. e. “I do not at all believe in what you say. They have turned penitent, they have first sought shelter at your feet and finally they have approached me as my servants. Well, my servants are altogether incapable of doing such acts as you complain of. And even if I were to admit that what you say are all literally true, if my servants really do anything wrong, let them do so. It is only a question between me and my servants. If they commit a fault, I alone am affected by it and no one else. So, I always forget it, I always forgive them.”

The Divine Mother is now thoroughly convinced that Her Lord has really received her children back into His favour with all their vices and imperfections.

Let us now sing the greatness and the glories of our Divine Mother. The all-blessed and all-holy Sri Parasara Bhattaryya (श्रीपराशर भट्टार्य्य), one of the greatest saints of Southern India, who flourished some seven or eight centuries ago, thus sings the glories of the Divine Mother in his memorable work, the Sri Guna Ratna Kosa—“श्रीगुणरत्नकोश ;

“पितेव त्वत्प्रेयान् जननि परिपूर्णागसिञ्जने ।

हितः स्रोतोद्वत्या भवति च कदाचित् कलुषधीः ॥

किमेतन्निर्दोषः क इह जगतीति त्वमुचितै ।

रूपायैर्विस्मयं स्त्रजनयसि माता तदसि नः ॥”

i. e. O Mother, Your dear Lord is ever busy in doing good to those who are full of sins, even as a beneficent father. But should He ever feel disgusted at the sight of their constantly recurring sins which seem to be like a never stopping current, you would at once step in and stand between them and your angry Lord and pacify Him in thousand ways. Thus, “Ah ! What is that, my Lord ? The All-merciful Lord, and angry ? Anger should hide his face in the presence of the Ocean of Mercy. My dearest Lord, let me only remind you that the world is, in its very essence, wicked, and, who can ever boast of being altogether free from faults in a wicked world like this ? Even if your blessed servants, Your august Lordship, and, my humble self were to live in a wicked world like this for a moment only, we would surely betray many sins in ourselves. The defect lies in your world and not in these poor creatures. O dear Mother of the Universe, Your appeal to the Lord seem to Him to be so strong and well grounded your arguments appear to Him to be so convincing and irresistible, the cause you fight for seem to Him to be really so noble and the manner in which you plead for it is so eloquent and persuasive as to cause him to forget all the faults of the sinful creatures and receive them for ever as objects of His

love and affection. Very fitly, therefore, you deserve to be called the Divine Mother of the Universe. .

The same saint, Bhattaraka Swami, as he is popularly called, sings in another place that the glories of the Divine Mother far outshine the glories of the Divine father and the Divine virtues of the former far excel those of the latter. He takes, for instance, one such virtue into consideration, namely Forgiveness and analyses it critically, He finds that the forgiveness of the Divine father cannot bear comparison with the forgiveness of the Divine Mother. For, He forgives only when we fall at his feet and pray for his forgiveness, whereas, She forgives unasked and of Her own accord. Her forgiveness is purely gratuitous. The saint prays to Her thus—"O Mother, let Thy voluntary and absolutely uncalled for forgiveness drive away all our fears ; for we are the blackest of all sinners, when we think of our unpardonable sins, we are in deep despair. But when we are reminded of Thy forgiveness, which is always given gratis, we cheer up, we are freed from all our fears and we become very happy whenever we think of Thy forgiveness." The saint then illustrates the truth of the statement by a concrete example. He cites the examples of Sita and of Rama and compares their virtues with each other. He proves successfully that the virtues of Sita far outshine the virtues of her husband Rama. Thus,

“मातर्मेधिलि राजसीस्त्वयि तदेवार्द्रापराधास्त्वया ।

रक्षन्वा पवनान्मजाह्वतरा रामस्य गोडीकृता ॥

काकं तं च विभीषणं शरणमित्युक्तिं क्षमौ रक्षतः ।

सा नः सान्द्रमहागसः सुखयतु चान्तिं स्तवाकस्मिकौ ॥”

(*Sri Guna Ratnakosa by the great*

—*Bhattaraka Swami*)

The gist of this quotation is that the glory of the Holy Assembly of the Divine Mother far transcends the glory of the Holy Assembly of the Divine Father and, the virtues of the Divine Mother far outshine the virtues of the Divine Father. To realise the truth of this statement a glance only is needed to be cast upon the scene afforded by the assembly of Rama and his followers when preparing for their fight with Ravana and upon that afforded by Sita, sitting as a poor and helpless prisoner in the Asoka Garden in the midst of many cruel-hearted maid-servants of Ravana charged with the task of torturing her almost to death until she consents to forsake her husband Rama and become the mistress of the wicked king of monsters Ravana.

If we were to draw a contrast between the two scenes, it would be at once manifest that the virtues of Rama cannot stand comparison with those of Sita. In the assembly of Rama, we find that he gave shelter and promised protection to two such beings as sought for his protection in a spirit of absolute resignation, namely, to (i) a crow and (ii) to Bibhishana. The crow had incurred his displeasure by tearing with its nails the breast of his wife Sita. He flung an arrow at it. It flew away in fear of being killed by the arrow and tried in vain to find

shelter somewhere or other. But finding shelter nowhere it fell at the feet of Rama and cried for Mercy. Sita was deeply touched with its distress and entreated her husband to pardon it. The crow was pardoned and was allowed to escape with the loss of an eye only. This is an instance of Rama's kindness to a fallen enemy. *Secondly*, Bibhishana being highly displeased with the sinful behaviour of his brother Ravana, and receiving only insults in return for the precious advice he gave him, deserted his home, his dear ones—wife and children—and all his dearest possessions on earth and sought shelter under Rama. Bibhishana said to Rama that he had forsaken everything in the hope of becoming a follower of Rama, who at once received him as a friend and admitted him into the assembly of his followers. This is another instance of Rama's kindness even to the kindred of his mortal enemy.

Let us now examine the virtues of Sita in her state of imprisonment. She was being constantly persecuted by the cruel and wicked maid-servants of Ravana when Hanumán saw her in that pitiable condition—Hanumán who was charged with the mission of ascertaining the whereabouts of Sita and of consoling her with the happy news that her husband was making a grand preparation to recover her as soon as possible by killing the wicked Ravana with all his progeny and party. When Hanumán saw how cruelly she was being persecuted by the maid-servants he resolved to be fully revenged for the wrongs she suffered at their hands. He went away with a heavy

heart and when he was deputed again to communicate to Sita the happy news of Ramá's victory and her own deliverance, Hanumán, before escorting Sita to her husband, wanted to be fully revenged for her persecutions by putting her persecutors, the maid-servants of Ravana, to a cruel death. Meanwhile, before this second advent of Hanumán, the woeful wailings of these persecutors at the news of their Lord's death reached the ears of Sita. Moved with their lamentations, she learnt on enquiry that they were crying simply because they were sure that Hanumán would wreak his vengeance fully upon them and torture them to a cruel death now that their lord Ravana was dead and now that there was no one to save them from his wrath. Sita immediately removed their fears and anxiety and set them at rest by promising her protection. When Hanuman came to her and begged her permission to punish her persecutors, she only expressed her dissent and disapproval of the act by turning her face away from him and setting with her back towards him—a sign of disgust and displeasure. She said nothing, but, Hanuman understood that she was very much displeased with him for asking her permission to do something which, in her eyes, was extremely dishonourable and disgraceful. He had thought that he would please her by putting her persecutors to a cruel torture before her eyes. He had, however, thoroughly misunderstood her divine nature and her superhuman character. For, she said presently,

“राजसंश्रयवशानां कुर्वन्तीनां तदानीम् ।

विधेयानाञ्च दासीनां कः कुप्येत् वानरोत्तमः ॥”

(*The Rāmāyana—Valmiki.*)

i.e. “O best of monkeys, who should ever think of venting his spleen upon such unworthy objects as these poor creatures? Are they not absolutely dependent on the pleasure of their king? Have they not been executing the wicked commands of their king simply through fear of incurring his serious displeasure? Are not menial maid-servants simply creatures in the hands of their master and mistress? And are they not guided entirely by the will of their lord and lady? When they do something wrong at the bidding of their lord, have they any choice in it? A subordinate is not to blame when he is forced to do something by his superior or when he is strictly enjoined by his superior to do something on pain of incurring his serious displeasure. What faults, then, have these poor creatures been found guilty of that you should think of avenging the wrong I have suffered at their hands by torturing them to a cruel death? Whatever they have done, they have done at the bidding of their lord. I consider them to be fully innocent and I highly disapprove of your intention to punish unnecessarily innocent creatures like these.”

Hanuman replied, “O kind-hearted Mother, let me humbly remind you that wicked as he was Ravana never ordered his maid-servants to persecute you so cruelly as they have done. He simply asked them

to guard you in your imprisonment, to use persuasion and not force. They simply took advantage of their position to betray their extremely wicked and cruel nature by persecuting you unnecessarily and unbidden. Whatever wrongs, therefore, you have suffered at their hands must be fully retaliated now. Your poor son, Hanuman, can never bear the idea of pardoning the cruel persecutors of his venerable Mother. I humbly beseech you not to depend such extremely wicked instruments of oppression from my noble indignation."

Finding him so firm in his purpose, Sita again said to him :—

“पापानां वाऽशुभानां वा वधाहर्त्तानां भवङ्गम ।

कार्यं करुणमर्येण न कश्चिन्नापराध्यति ॥”

(*The Ramayana — Valmiki*).

i. e. “You are at best a monkey ; you only know how to walk by leaps and bounds. It is your nature to do so and you betray your nature in all things. You do not understand business. In business, one should never proceed by leaps and bounds, as you do. Besides, what you have said is utterly unworthy of the servant of the very noble-hearted lord you serve under. He is an Aryya (आर्य) or nobleness personified. And, mercy is the most essential attribute of a truly noble mind. He who has such a noble mind should always show mercy even to his mortal enemy and even if such enemy be the very image of vice and the embodiment of all sorts of evil and even if his offences be so heinous in their nature

as to be punishable with death alone. Further, let me ask you 'Who is there in this world that has committed no sin?' There is none. Have I not sinned myself when I sent my husband away in pursuit of a golden deer—a monster in disguise—and thus voluntarily exposed myself to a danger which has cost the lives of so many innocent creatures? Has not the great Lakshmana also sinned when he left me to myself and went away in quest of his elder brother, Rama, at my words which he ought to have wholly disregarded in consideration of the fact that Rama left him as my guard and protector in his absence? Is not your worthy Lord, Rama himself guilty, when he killed so many monsters in the forest of Dandaka, who had done no offence to him personally. He came to the forest merely as an exile at the bidding of his father, who never bade him wage an eternal warfare with the monsters of the forest. He had no business whatever to kill the monsters of the forest and thus invite unnecessary dangers. Again, are not you yourself to blame when you burnt the golden city of Lanka and killed the servants of Ravana unbidden? You were deputed simply to ascertain the whereabouts of myself and console me with the news of your Lord. But, on your arrival here, you did many things of your own accord and for which you had no sanction whatever. You see, therefore, that if put to the test, no one in this world would be found altogether free from faults. Should you, then, being the ideal servant of an ideal master, ever think of punishing these innocent

creatures, my cruel persecutors, as you say, who are the best objects of your pity now? If you do so, it would be a disgrace to yourself and to your all-noble and all-merciful master, Rama himself."

By these and such like irresistible arguments Sita succeeded in pacifying the anger of Hanuman and saved her cruel persecutors from his vengeance and from the jaws of death.

Language can hardly conceive of an idea, so grand so lofty, so noble as this cited above. The idea, "पापानां वाश्यमानां वा.....नापराध्यति" finds parallel nowhere and stands unique in its spirit and sentiment. That we should be merciful even to our mortal enemy that we should treat kindly even those who are the very images of vice and the living embodiments of all sorts of evil and who are so guilty as to deserve death by all means, that we should be ever alive to the truth that there is none in this world who can boast of being altogether free from faults, are lessons which are so grand and noble in their very nature as to deserve being impressed on our mind so deeply as to fear no erasure. It is an idea which is the very essence of Religion and which is at the root of all virtues. If we remember it always in our minds and if we always try to reduce it into practice, the mission of our life would be fulfilled. It must always be the ruling principle of our conduct. The lesson taught to Hanuman by the kind hearted and all accomplished Sita should be recorded in all the languages of the world and it should be preached from one end of the world to the other. The idea contained in this lesson

is so holy as to purify our heart by washing off all its harshness and unpleasantness. It must be noted here that the promise made by Sita to shield her cruel persecutors from the vengeance of Hanuman was purely gratuitous. They never prayed to Her to make such a promise. They were too well aware of their own cruel treatment and unkind behaviour towards Sita to think of saving themselves with her help. Their lamentations, however, pierced her to the quick and unasked she volunteered her services to save her bitterest enemies from a death which they so well deserved.

If we now weigh in the balance the virtues of Sita with those of Rama, the latter would be found to kick the beam at once. Rama showed his mercy to those who fell at his feet and prayed to him for his pardon and protection and Sita to those who had unnecessarily persecuted her almost to death who had never even dreamt of going to her for her protection and help. The forgiveness of Sita was thus purely gratuitous.

The consideration of this pleasing and hopeful idea encourages the Saint Bhattaraka Swami to pray to the Divine Mother for Her gratuitous forgiveness. He confesses to Her that he is infinitely more guilty than the cruel persecutors of Sita and humbly prays to the Divine Mother that Her gratuitous forgiveness may shield him from the vengeance of the Divine father. “सा नः सान्द्रमहागुप्तः सुखयतु चान्तिस्तवाकक्षिकी” Thus it is seen everywhere that the virtues of an ideal woman far outshine the virtues of an ideal

man. If the two be separately analysed it would appear that woman is the combination of the tender graces and man of the sterner qualities. It is only by virtue of his association with woman, who is very aptly called his better half that man reflects in himself the graces which are peculiarly her own. Man is by nature hard in his heart and woman soft and tender in her heart.

Let us now turn to our Divine Father, and see if the truths which hold good in the case of man and woman here hold equally good in Heaven and if they are applicable to our father there or not. In doing so, however, we enter the world of Faith. But nevertheless, faith may sometimes be found to stand on the foundation of facts, experiences, certain truths and immutable laws. If it be at all possible to conceive of God as our father, it is far easier to conceive of Him as our Mother also. It is a natural fact that a child knows more of its mother than of its father, and, in the first stage, it recognises its mother only. It is the mother, who gradually teaches her child to recognise the father also. Again, we always see that the three entities namely, father, mother, and child are inseparably associated with one another. In the world of Religion, therefore, if we acknowledge God as the father and man as His child, we must also acknowledge the third entity, namely, God as the mother. For, the conception of the whole thing would be incomplete if either of the three be omitted. The three entities, father, mother and child is a complete idea in nature. But

only two entities father and child, or even mother and child is an incongruity. If by mere analogy, therefore, we regard God as our Father and ourselves as His children and ignore the third element, namely, God as our mother, the analogy itself is defective. If it be argued that it is not at all a mere analogy but a truth in the world of faith and religion that there is only God, the father and men His children and that there is no God, the Mother, still, we are free to compare this truth with that which equally asserts the existence of the three entities, namely, God, as Father, God as Mother, and we their Children and we are equally free to choose either of the two truths.

A still more weighty consideration is the fact that man is always regarded as the sinful child of God and he needs must be redeemed and reclaimed by the Father. A child who has sinned against his father, and, specially, when the sins are so heavy as to be unpardonable in their very nature, has no hope whatever of being ever redeemed by his father, inasmuch as the father would always turn away from him at the very sight of his sins. But, if, in such a case there be a mother who is always blind to the defects of her child and who also combines in herself such graces as to have the father entirely in her hands, she would find no difficulty whatever in having her child redeemed and reconciled to the father. This truth cannot be denied and disputed.

Again, if we assume only two entities, namely, father and infinite sinful children, it would at once

appear that the children would all perish in no time. If a mother dies soon after childbirth, the father is at a loss. At this crisis, the father would invariably appoint a good nurse to take care of the child. The father is by nature utterly incompetent for the task of nourishing and bringing up the child. That onerous and responsible duty always devolves upon the mother. If, then, it be difficult for a father to take care of even one motherless child, how much more difficult would the task be of bringing up many such children. The father himself would surely die of despair when he finds himself so unfortunate as to have to take care of infinite motherless children. Here perhaps, someone would come forward with the argument "That which is not possible with man is possible with God." It is possible with God, no doubt. But how?

Let the two ideas,

The Divine Father, taking care of his countless children without the help and co-operation of their Divine Mother,

and,

The Divine Father taking care of his infinite children with the aid and co-operation of the Divine Mother,

be compared and considered side by side, and the question will answer for itself.

The Divine Father can save so many sinful children only with the gratuitous help and co-operation of the Divine Mother. To ignore the entity of the

Divine Mother is to deprive the Divine Father of this valuable help and co-operation.

Again, to a sinful child who turns penitent and who is eager to be reconciled to his father, the idea that he has an affectionate mother who is always blind to his defects and who is ever ready to reconcile him to his father without any ado is very much pleasing, hopeful, and encouraging. If, therefore, we sinners of this earth only remember that we have a Divine Mother who is ever anxious of reconciling us to our Divine Father and if we sinners of this earth only remember that we have a saviour in our own Divine Mother, if we only turn to Her and cry, "Mother, receive thy sinful children unto Thy bosom and save them from their sins," we are then and there redeemed. For, our Divine Mother is constantly praying for our redemption gratuitously, pleading our cause before our Divine Father and has already secured His pardon for us. We sinners, therefore, need only turn penitent and turn to our Divine Mother to be redeemed and reclaimed for our eternal sins.

The saints of Southern India, past as well as present, preach this grand doctrine to the whole world. They all acknowledge the Blessed Ramanuja Swami (an incarnation of Ananta Deva or the Ideal servant of God in Heaven) to be their Spiritual Preceptor. And it is only Ramanuja Swami who has revealed the pleasing truth that our Divine Mother is our natural and original saviour. He calls the Divine Mother Sri (श्रीः) (the sixfold derivation of

the term (page 67) has already been given in the chapter preceding) and the sect to which he belongs is called the Sri Sampradaya (श्रीसम्प्रदाय) inasmuch as the followers of this sect acknowledge the Divine Mother Sri (श्रीः) to be their original saviour and inasmuch as they hold that we sinful children can approach our Divine Father only through our Divine Mother Sri, whom they regard as the Mediatrix between God and the sinful creatures. The followers of this sect, therefore call themselves as Srivaishnavas (श्रीवैष्णवाः) as distinguished from the other Vaishnavas. The predecessors of Ramanuja also preached the same truth, but as they could not make it a popular religion, Ramanuja himself is regarded as the real founder of the doctrine in consideration of his having preached it successfully all over India and the doctrine is called after him as the Ramanuja Siddhanta.

The conception of God both as our Father and Mother is more pleasing, more encouraging and more hopeful than the conception of God as Father only. It is also more natural and therefore more attractive.

Again, we can never think of God as our Father without thinking of God as our Mother. If we do so at all, it is a defect of the thinking faculty for to conceive of God as Father only and as apart from any conception of God as Mother also is to conceive of a flower apart from its smell. A flower and its perfume are inseparably associated with each other and it is only the perfume that makes the flower sweet.

The Saint Bhattaraka Swami sings in another place,

“तवस्पर्शादीश सृशति कमले मङ्गलपदं ।

तवेदं नोपाधेरुपनिपतितं श्रीरसि यतः ॥

प्रसूनं पुष्पन्तीमपि परिमलर्द्धिं जिगदिषु ।

नैवेवं त्वादेवं खदत इति कश्चित् कवयतै ॥”

(*Sri-Guna-Ratna Kosa*)

i. e. “O Divine Mother, Thou who art the embodiment of all blessings, it is Thy contact alone by virtue of which the Divine Father receives His graces. For, in Thy very essence, Thou art the sum total of all graces, virtues and blessings.” A king is a king by virtue of his title only. Strip him of this title and he is an ordinary man. Similarly, God is the Lord of all blessings simply by virtue of His association with the Divine Mother, who, in her very essence, is the embodiment of all blessings whatever. Separate the Lord from Her and He is no longer the Lord of all blessings but simply a Lord. The Divine Mother gives a title to the Divine Father ; Cp. “श्रियः पतिः” sifted from “श्रियः” He becomes an ordinary “पतिः” ।

The word “Blessing” श्रीः is not, however, a mere title to the Divine Mother, sri, (श्रीः) for, she is in herself the natural embodiment of all blessings. It is pre-eminently the perfume which gives a flower the title “sweet-scented.” Strip the flower of its perfume and it is nothing ; it is worthless. When we speak of the excellence of the perfume, however, we never say, the perfume is so sweet because of this or because of that or because of anything whatever.” In other words, the perfume gives a title to the flower (the

title "sweet-scented"). but, there is nothing to give a title to the perfume itself. The excellence of the perfume, therefore, makes the flower excellent. Similarly, the excellence of the Divine Mother makes the Divine Father excellent.

Man has his virtues, no doubt. But, it is only his association with woman that gives him an idea of the tender graces of a woman. A man who has never seen a woman is an imperfect man inasmuch as he has no idea whatever of the excellent virtues and graces of a woman. It is a patent fact that some virtues are peculiar to man only and some graces are peculiar to woman only. God, therefore, who combines in Himself all the graces and virtues and who is the perfection of all manly virtues as well as the perfection of all feminine graces must surely be regarded as having a male as well as a female aspect or, better, a divinely male and a divinely female aspect. As it is undeniable that the Divine attributes are partly masculine and partly feminine, it is very easy to conceive of God both as our Father and as our Mother. And a child who knows both his father and his mother is surely far better than a child who knows only his father or only his mother. The growth, development and nature of the latter will surely be incomplete, imperfect, defective as well as unnatural. In the same way a man who can conceive of God both as his Father as well as his Mother may be compared with a man who can conceive of only one aspect of Him and the difference will at once appear to be very striking.

Again, when we consider the question of servitude, the difference in the result is seen to be very great. He who serves and pleases his father as well as his mother may be compared with him who serves and pleases only one of them and in the same degree, and the result will appear to vary very greatly.

Besides, to think of the all-glorious kingdom of Heaven, to think of the still more glorious king of Heaven and never to think of the all-transcendent and all-glorious, all-graceful, all-perfect, all-merciful, all-good and all-accomplished Queen of Heaven is something unnatural and unpleasant. A kingdom which has always a king only but which has never seen a queen, is surely a defective, disagreeable and undesirable place of habitation, though it be Heaven itself. A king who is never blessed with a queen is at best only a fraction of a king.

King and Queen are correlative terms. The idea of king includes the idea of queen. We should, therefore, always like to think of the King of Heaven along with the Queen of Heaven.

We should always serve the king and the Queen of Heaven together. A king without a queen is dangerous to serve. A king with a queen is far more easy and safe to serve. The queen is surely the better half of the king.

The worship of God, only as the King of Heaven must surely be a very dangerous and difficult task and it does not seem to be consistent with reason, truth and analogy. But, the worship of God in His dual aspect as the King and the Queen of Heaven is

at once easy and pleasant, natural and consistent with reason, truth and analogy.

Let us conclude this chapter with some of the solemn hymns which recount the glories of our Divine Mother, in the words of the Saint Bhattaraka Swami ;—

“ऐशर्यमचरन्ति परमं पदं वा ।
कस्मैचिदस्त्रलिभरं वहते वितौर्य ॥
अस्मै न किञ्चिदुचितं कृतमित्यथाम्ब ।
त्वं लज्जसे कथय कोऽयमुदारभावः ॥”

(*Sri-Guna-Ratna-Kosa* “श्रीगुणरत्नकोशः”)

“Mother, your manner of bestowing the divine gifts upon your devotees is transcendently graceful and charming. Even after heaping all the choicest gifts upon a devotee, even after showering all your choicest blessings upon him, you appear to be ashamed of having done nothing to him. This generosity of Thine strikes us with mute admiration.”

Again, .

“श्रीरंगी शरदां शतं सह सुहृद्वर्गेण निष्कण्ठकं ।
निर्दुःखं सुसुखञ्च दास्यरसिकां भुक्त्वा सन्निधिं पराम् ॥
युष्मत्पादसरोरुहान्तररजः स्याम त्वमम्बा पिता ।
सर्वञ्च त्वमपि त्वमेव भवतः स्त्रीकुर्वकस्मात् क्षपाम् ॥” .

(*Idem*)

In these lines, the Saint Sri Parasara Bhattaryya (श्रीपराशरभट्टार्य) prays to the Divine Mother and invokes Her Divine blessing thus :—“Mother, may

I enjoy the supreme bliss of Divine servitude along with those who are nearest to my heart for a long hundred years in this Heavenly city of Sri Rangam, without ever being hampered by any obstacle or misery ; may I continue to enjoy the supreme delight of Divine servitude for ever here, unfettered by a sense of crime, and unmolested by any domestic misfortune. May I be ever so busy in serving Thee and Thy Holy Assembly as to forget myself altogether and may I be literally transformed into the very dust of the lotus-like feet of Thyself and Thy Lord. O Mother, Thou art Thyself my Father, Mother and everything. Let Thy absolute and gratuitous Grace receive me for ever unto Thy Holy Feet. May Thou continue to shower Thy choicest blessings upon all Thy devotees, upon this King of sinners and upon all Thy children." Amen !

The fourth purification, therefore, consists in the first place in our being reconciled to our Divine Father through the mediation of the Divine Mother, and, secondly, in our serving both of them simultaneously, Worship or servitude only of the Father or only of the Mother does not produce so quick and good a result as the worship or servitude of both does. If we can please our Father and Mother both, the result would be *ceteris paribus*, far better than if we please only one of them and to the same degree. Again; servitude of the Divine Father and Mother reaches its culminating point when it ends in the servitude of the Lord's devotees. The Divine Father and Mother are both served best when Their devotees are

served. We can please the Lord most only by pleasing the Lord's devotees. Cf.

“आराधनानां सर्वेषां विष्णोराराधनं परं ।

परात् परतरं प्रोक्तं तदीयाराधनं नृप ॥”

(*Prapannamrita* प्रपन्नमृत by *Anantacharya Swami*).

i. e. “The worship of the All-pervading God is the highest form of worship ; but, higher than the highest is the worship of God's devotees.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE Fifth purificatory Act or Panchama Samskara

We now come to the Fifth Purification which helps us in following a sacred routine of life. It is called *Yaga* (याग) or *Aradhana Bidhi* (आराधन विधि) i.e. the method of daily Divine servitude.

A sacred routine of life means a routine which is calculated to make our lives sacred. Our lives are a series of actions and these actions again are three-fold in their nature,—mental, physical, and vocal. All our actions become sacred when we follow a sacred routine of life. Such a routine helps us in cherishing noble thoughts and aspirations, in purifying our speech and all our bodily acts. For, the purification of self means the purification of our mind, body and speech. The three aspects of our nature require to be perfectly purified before we can hope for any

progress in the path of our spiritual advancement. Such a purification, however, is by no means an easy task. It can be attained only by a crowning act of Divine Mercy. Man is by nature impure and imperfect and he can become pure and perfect only by the Absolute Grace of the Almighty. Self-exertion is indispensably necessary, no doubt, but, self-exertion needs must be directed aright, and, in order that it may be so directed we need constantly to invoke the blessing of the Lord. Without his help we can do nothing whatever. Let us now consider carefully the question of a Sacred Routine of our lives. Such a routine must be so framed as to leave no room for our indulgence in anything unworthy and undesirable. The duties of the morning must be carefully reckoned in the first place, then the duties of the mid-day and finally those of the evening.

“प्रातर्दूतप्रसंगिन, मध्याह्न श्रीप्रसंगतः ।

सायं श्रीरप्रसंगिन कालो गच्छति धीमताम् ॥”

i. e. “Wise men beguile their morning hours in recounting such of the Divine attributes as reveal to the fullest extent the tender solicitude of the All-merciful Lord for the welfare of those who seek refuge in the cool recess of His Holy Feet; they beguile the the hours of noon in chanting the glories of the Lord who can be easily pleased and approached through the mediation of the Divine Mother; finally, they beguile the evening hours in singing those attributes of the Lord which wash away all our impurities and bathe us with all the blessings of the Lord.”

In the morning we should think of those Divine attributes which lead the Lord to serve those who seek shelter at His Holy feet.

The mid-day hours should be spent in recounting the glories and infinite graces of the Divine Mother who is our natural Saviour and who helps us in being reconciled and reunited with our Divine Father.

In the evening we are to think of those attributes of God the very recollection of which robs us of all our imperfections and impurities.

A precious part of the morning should be set aside for our private prayer. During this prayer we are to repent bitterly for having wasted a precious life in doing nothing but evil, and, then we are to cry for Divine Mercy. We are to expose our weakness fully before the Lord and enumerate in detail the sins that we commit from day to day. It is a never ending and ever lengthening chain of sins that we are to reveal to the Lord and ask for His forgiveness. And the infinite Mercy of the Lord leads him to forgive and forget all our faults as soon as we repent for him and ask for His forgiveness. Whenever we pray to God, we must, in the first place, repeat for the past, expatiate on our follies and failings and then submit ourselves to the Lord in a spirit of deep humiliation and in an attitude of absolute resignation. By virtue of this resignation we feel confident that the All-merciful Father has very kindly pardoned all our past misdemeanours and received us once more into his favour. We then recount the praises and the glories of the

All-kind and All-forgiving Divine Mother and the Divine Father and then pray for the welfare of the whole universe. When we become purified by constant private prayer we pray for others more than for ourselves. Such is the wholesome effect of a truly unselfish prayer that it causes us at once to forget ourselves and think only of the welfare of the world. Very aptly, therefore, has it been said by Tennyson that "More things are wrought by prayer than this world can dream of." Such is the efficacy of prayer that it purifies our heart at once and we are melted at the sight of the miseries of the world. We feel keenly how difficult it is to reform our own conduct, how very difficult it is to free ourselves from the temptations of flesh and blood and how utterly impossible it is for us to get rid of our sins without the Absolute Grace of the Lord. When we realise fully the difficulty of self-improvement and self-reformation we pray earnestly to the Lord to help us in the matter as well as to help our brothers and other beings in the Universe. Prayer for ourselves as well as for others, therefore, is the primary business of our lives. Prayer is the prime factor of our lives and it is prayer alone that is the end of our existence. Prayer and praise of the Lord purifies the impure and makes perfect those that are imperfect.

A sacred routine of life, therefore, must be so framed as to afford ample scope for constant private prayer. We must always learn how to snatch a half-hour from our arduous task of the day in order to find time for a fervent and pathetic private prayer.

We are, by nature, Ignorant, Incapable and Incompetent.

We do not *know* what will lead to our good ; we are utterly *incapable* of doing anything which will bring forth our good and we are really incompetent in this respect.

(1) “अज्ञ” (2) “अशक्त” and “अप्राप्त” (i.e. अयोग्य)

These are the three epithets which mark the absolute dependence of puny, insignificant and sinful finite creatures upon the Absolute Grace and Mercy of the Infinite Being. The three attributes enumerated above are the very essence of our being. Whatever we do, we do only a sin. We are, by our very nature, sinners ; and, we can do nothing but sins. We are, therefore, entirely at the mercy of the Lord. We should only cry and cry and cry again for His Mercy. His Mercy *alone* can save us. We can never save ourselves by our own merits. For,

“ Merit lives from man to man
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee.”

(Tennyson—*In Memoriam*.)

We shall be all weighed in the balance and found wanting. Hence, the necessity of constant private prayer. Whenever we do anything we must acknowledge before the Lord that we have done only a wrong and we must ask for His pardon. We should never lose sight of the awful reality that whatever we do is nothing but a sin, and it is only when we confess our sins before the Lord and ask for His pardon that we

are really pardoned. Jesus Christ also teaches us the same lesson. After you have done all your duties of the day say to your Lord,

“Lord, we are unprofitable and unworthy Servants.”

Prayer, therefore, should always precede and follow all our actions whatever. When we have learnt this we have learnt everything and so long as we do not learn this, we learn nothing.

When we become the object of Absolute Grace of the Lord, our Saviour, we learn how to pray. We pray not for ourselves but for the whole world. This is, therefore, the highest glory and the most enviable position of man—the position, namely, when he forgets himself and prays only for the well-being of the universe. We can attain this high position only by a crowning act of Divine Mercy and Divine Grace.

A precious part of the morning being thus spent in prayer to the Lord for the welfare of the whole universe, the devotee then attends to the other duties of the day which may be broadly divided as—

- (1) Morning and Forenoon Duties.
- (2) Mid-day and Afternoon Duties.
- (3) Evening and Night Duties.

Morning and Forenoon Duties defined :—

Physical Ablutions—Purification of the body as the most favourite temple and the dearest abode of God. The Holy Bible says, “The upright heart and pure is the temple where God most delights to dwell.”

When we bathe we must remember that the sacred water with which we wash the Holy Feet of the Lord, our Saviour, and, of the Lord's devotees washes us of all our sins and impurities. This is the ethical and esoteric significance of a Holy Bath. Thus,

“भगवद् भागवताचार्य श्रीपादतीर्थं मां पुनातु ।”

Whenever we perform our ablutions we should bear in mind that the Sacred Water, or, श्रीपादतीर्थ, as it is very aptly termed, purifies our *mind*, *body*, and, *soul* together. We should think that we are for ever being immersed in this ocean of Sacred Water and steeped in this nectar of Holy Water which sanctifies the soul of a sinner and secures for him the bliss immense of endless servitude of those Blessed Beings who bless all the beings of the universe. Being thus steeped in the ocean of this Nectar of Sacred Water, we find ourselves from the frailties of this body of flesh and blood and we offer our thanks to the Saviour who saves us from all our sins. Thus.

“नित्यं मज्जन्नमृत जलधौ निस्तरेयं भवाब्धिम् ॥” .

i. e. “May I cross very easily the ocean of life by being for ever steeped in that Ocean of Sacred Water with which we bathe the Holy feet of the Lord, our Saviour, and of the Lord's devotees.” After this ablution, we are absorbed in holy meditation (ध्यान). We are now at peace with the whole universe and we feel ourselves to be enjoying divine delight under the cool shade of the Saviour's Holy Feet which we bathe in the tears of our gratitude.

By virtue of this meditation we find ourselves

translated into the holy assembly of the Blessed Attendants of the Lord. Worship of the Lord and of the Lord's attendants and devotees comes next. How to worship them properly is a question which can be answered only by those devout saints and advanced sages who enjoy the special privilege of carrying out the dearest wishes of the Lord and whose only duty consists in pleasing the Lord in every possible way and by every possible means.

The Lord does not like anything which takes the form of a mere insincere show of worship or a hollow ceremony. Worship offered by a sincere heart and in a spirit of deep humility is that which pleases the Lord most. Again, we should not worship him with any selfish motive for, “कामकलुषितचित्तानामुपासना सर्वेश्वरस्य नातिप्रोतये भवति ।” *i. e.* “Those who worship the Lord for the fulfilment of an unworthy object of desire can never please the Lord by their prayer. No doubt, the all-blessed Sage, the great Sathakopa Swami in his memorable work *Bhagavad Vishaya*” (भगवद्विषय) invites the universe to join him in his prayer to the Lord and never in the least stops to think whether those who join him in his prayer are free from their selfish desires or not. No doubt, the same Sage assures the world that all forms of prayer and worship of the great God of gods are welcome to him; but, it is not meant thereby that they are all dear to him to the same extent and degree, and, surely, they differ from each other very greatly in their results. What the all-blessed Sage really means when he invites all to join him in his

prayer is that "Prayer to the Almighty God purifies all impure hearts and from whatever motive we may pray to Him at first we are sure to become unselfish in our prayers ultimately."

A sample of sincere and unselfish prayer is given below.

Thus,

“अमर्यादः क्षुद्रखलमतिरसूयाप्रमवभूः ।

कृतघ्नोदुर्मानौघरपरवशो वञ्चनपरः ॥

नृशंसः पापिष्ठः कथमहमितो दुःखजलधे ।

रपारादुत्तीर्णस्तवपरिचरेयं चरणयोः ॥”

i.e. (*बालमन्दार or The Hymn of Hymns by the Saint Yamunacharyya Swami*)

Lord, I am a monster of cruelty, an image of pride, egotism, self-conceit, envy, malice, arrogance, lust, avarice, anger and ignorance. I am no respecter of superiors ; I am mean-minded,—a living and never-failing fountain of jealousy, ungrateful, treacherous, deceitful and the king of sinners. How is it possible for me, then, O Lord, to overcome these obstacles in the way of my prayer and worship, to cross this boundless ocean of miseries which always await a sinful life like that which I lead here, and to wait upon Thy Holy Feet ?”

दुःखावहोऽहमनिशं तव दुष्टचेष्ट ।

शब्दादिभोगनिरतः शरणागताख्यः ॥

त्वत्पादभक्त इव शिष्टजनौघमध्ये ।

मिथ्या चरामि यतिराजततोऽस्मिन्मुखः ॥

(*Prayer by Vara-Vara-Muni Swami.*)

i.e. "Lord, my only business is to make Thee miserable, for, I do only such acts as are highly displeasing to Thee. I am, by nature, wicked to the extreme; the gratification of the pleasures of the senses is the be-all and the end-all of my existence. Yet, I call myself as one whose sole refuge is the Lord. I practise dissimulation by introducing myself in the assembly of the good and the pious as though I were a devoted follower of Thy Holy Feet, O Lord."

The daily worship over, we are to take a part of the "consecrated food." The expression "consecrated food" requires an explanation. It reminds us of the sublime principle of conduct underlying all religions, viz.

“आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः सत्त्वशुद्धौ भवाम्भुतिः” ॥

i.e. "Consecrated food is the very essence of the consecrated soul, and only such a soul enjoys an uninterrupted communion with the Lord."

It is only based on the trite principles of (1) Plain living and high thinking" and (2) "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Before taking a part of the consecrated food, the living Saints of Southern India sing the glories of the Saviour, the Divine attributes of the Saviour and how he sacrificed himself for others and how he saves the world by taking upon Himself the burden of sins of mankind. After singing the glories of the Sarviour, the living saints of Southern India perform the ceremony of श्रीपादतौर्यग्रहण (*Sir-pada-tirtha-grahana*), that is to say they drink the sanctified

water with which the Holy Feet of the greatest of the saints are bathed. And, finally, they take a part of the consecrated food, which is more wholesome than any food in the world. It may be described in the following words,

“अतिप्रभूतमत्यन्तं भक्तिपूतं चतुर्विधं ।
 पथं पाकविशिषाढ्यं रुच्यं दोषविर्जातं ॥
 दिव्यं दृष्टिप्रदं हृद्यं सरसं सौरभोत्तरं ।
 सर्वोपचारपूर्वं यत् सम्पाद्यप्रेमपूर्वकं ॥
 देवदेव तदेतत् ते ददौ वरवरो मुनिः ।
 अतस्तद् विषय प्रीतिप्रेरितः करुणानिधे ॥
 अत्रैव सन्निधाय त्वमखिलैः सह भोक्तृभिः ।
 अनन्यहृदये सभ्यगासीनः परमात्मे ।
 श्रीमन्नारायण स्वामिन्नेतत् स्वीकर्तुमर्हसि ॥

(नित्याराधनविधि by the Disciples of Vara-Vara-Muni)

The consecrated food is prepared in a very large quantity by those devotees whose hearts are full of reverence and affection for the Lord. There is always an ample variety of the dishes—broadly classified under four heads 1 Food that is to be chewed down (चर्व्यं) 2. That which is taken by sucking (चोष्य) 3. That which is taken by licking (लेह्य) 4 That which is drunk or liquid food or (पेय) as it is usually called. The consecrated food is very healthy and exceedingly palatable.

It is cooked by the best experts, systematically, methodically and scientifically, with all the necessary

ingredients, the best spices, the most recently collected herbs and fresh vegetables. It is free from all defects whatever. It is divine in its nature and agreeable to the sight. It revivifies the spirits and is invigorating in the truest sense of the term. It is succulent and its flavour is always far-reaching. It is not wanting in any of the details which go to make a thing wholly perfect and it is offered to the Giver of all blessings with a heart rendered pure by constant devotion. It is a very wholesome food and it may be prescribed even to a dying soul without any injury.

The saints partake of this healthy diet after offering their heartfelt thanks to Heaven. Their hearts overflow with gratitude when they think that the after-effects of the enjoyment of this divinely excellent dish is purifying to an eminent degree and that it always brings in its train health, happiness and longevity. They are reminded of the truth that the partaking of the consecrated food enables us to lead a divine life.

Thus,

“प्रसादाद्जीवनं”

(*The Holy Text of Vara-Vara-Muni*).

The word “*Prasada*” means a Divine food—a food which is really accepted by God. And it is a fact that God accepts a food only when His dearest servants on earth partake of that food. When they enjoy a dish, God himself enjoys it. Anything which is gratifying to them is gratifying to Him also. It is for this reason alone that all truly great men in

this world sacrifice everything to please the dearest servants of God living on this earth at present. The mightiest Alvárs of Southern India, the great Parakala Swami and the great Kulasekhar Swami spared no pains to find out the greatest of the saints living in their days and when they succeeded in finding them out they spent all their hard-earned money in feeding those saints every day. And, what remained after they (the saints) had partaken of the dishes offered to them, became the "*Prasada*" or consecrated food which was afterwards shared among all the members of the family of Kulasekhar Swami and of Parakala Swami.

The ethical significance of this laudable practice is obvious and interesting. We should every day feed some of the dearest servants of God, before we enjoy a dish ourselves. Those that are God-fearing and those whose lives are a continuous round of prayer and thanks-giving to God, are always fortunate enough in finding the real servants of God as guests in their sacred houses every day. When we feed these deserving guests we feed God himself and that which remains after these guests are properly fed everyday is commonly called the "Divine Food" or "*Prasada*" or "*Nectar*." It is only this food which we should take everyday and no other. Such a food purifies our heart and unites us for ever with our Heavenly Father and Mother.

To do justice to the Fifth Purification or Yága (याग) as it is commonly called, we need only think of the *Aradhana-Vidhi* (आराधन विधि) of the great Vara-

Vara Muni Swami. He used to get up very early in the morning between the hours of three and four and to spend nearly an hour in holy Contemplation in which he used to hold direct communion with God. During this blessed communion with the Almighty Being, he would not ask for any blessing but he would forget his own being altogether and he would be busy in invoking all the blessings upon God himself, as though God were his dearest new-born baby whom he was anxious to guard against all evils whatever. He would then go to the holy river Cauvery (कावेरी) along with his select disciples and perform the ceremony of *Tirumanjana* or Holy Bath. After that he would return to his hermitage and perform his daily worship; then accompanied by a few followers he would go to visit the Holy Temple of Sri Ranganáth (for, he used to live at Sri Ranganam in Trichinopoly, in the Madras Presidency). In that temple he would worship (1) Devi-Goda (देवी गोदा), i.e. (आण्डाल) A'ndál; or The Divine Mother (2) Yatipati (यतिपति) or the Universal Saviour (3) The Great Alvár Sathakópa Swami (शठकोप स्वामी) (4) Ranga Sringam (रंगशृङ्गम्) (5) Senánátha (सेनानाथ) or Vishvakasena Swami (विश्वकसेन स्वामी)—(6) Vihaga-Vrishava (विहगवृषभ) or Garúdá Deva (7) Mahá Lakshmi (महालक्ष्मी) i. e. श्रीदेवी (Sri Devi) together with भूदेवी (Bhoo-Devi) and नीलादेवी (Neela Devi)—श्रीरंगनायकी (Sri Ranga Náyaki) and श्रीरंगनाथ (Sri-Ranga-nátha). All these may be summed up in the following well known verse which is chanted daily by the followers of *Vara-Vara-Muni-Swami*, viz,

“देवौ गोदा यतिपति शठद्वेषिणौ रंगशृङ्गम् ।
 सेनानाथो विहगहृषभः श्रीनिधिः सिन्धुकन्या ॥
 भूमा नीला गुरुजनहृतः पुरुषश्चेत्यमीषा
 मये नित्यं वरवरसुनेरंघ्रियुग्मं प्रपद्ये ॥”

On his return from the Holy temple he would enter the Blessed Mandapa styled Sri Sailanatharyya (श्रीशैलनाथार्यं नाम्नि श्रीमति मण्डपे) and there he would busy himself in expounding the mysteries of the Divya Pravandha (दिव्य प्रवन्ध) or *Dramidopanishada*—the Tamil Vedas and Vedantas—to his select disciples. Thus,

अथ श्रीशैलनाथार्यं नाम्नि श्रीमति मण्डपे ।
 तदंघ्रि पङ्कजदन्तच्छायामध्यनिवासिनम् ॥
 तत्त्वं दिव्यप्रवन्धानां सारं संसार वैरिणाम् ।
 सरसं सरहस्त्रानां व्याचक्षाणं नमामि तम् ॥

This Tamil Veda is so very sweet and so full of deep thoughts that its study is said to destroy all our attachment for anything but God. It teaches us that God alone is the object of our love and affection and that God is really all in all to us. If we forget Him even for a moment it is our greatest loss and greatest misery. The singing of the Divya-Pravandha brings about our salvation and unities us with the Divine Being in such a way as to know no separation.

After explaining the secrets of the Tamil Vedas to his disciples, the great Sage Vara-Vara-Muni Swami would bless his disciples and favour them with the Holy Water or Sri-Páda-Tirtha (श्रीपादतीर्थ).

Then he would perform his daily mid-day worship or *Tiru Aradhana* (तिरु आराधन) as it is called in Tamil and then distribute the consecrated food or *Prasada* to his disciples. Afterwards he would sit in the holy assembly of the saints and purify the hearts of sinner by looking kindly on them and invoking the blessings of God upon them. Then he would forget himself altogether in the holy contemplation of the infinite excellent attributes of the Divine Being. He would then become one with God and he would pray to him earnestly to save all creatures by a crowning act of Divine Mercy.

Thus the blessed sage Vara-Vara-Muni passed the whole day in doing good to the world. And, in the evening also he would only pray for the welfare of the universe. His sacred routine of life reminds us of the beautiful lines of Tennyson,

“Thrice blessed whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher loves endure,
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?”

(*In Memoriam*)

Those favourites of God who are so fortunate as to be entirely free from the temptations of flesh and blood enjoy the privilege of serving Him at all times under all circumstances and in all places. It is their sacred routine of life that we should always try to follow through the grace of God. It is an ideal routine, and, as such, it can be followed only with the kind help of the All-merciful Father.

“ HAVE MERCY ON THY SINFUL CHILDREN, O FATHER,
AND TEACH THEM TO WALK ON THE PATH OF VIRTUE ;

AND,

LET THY CHILDREN BE ALL REDEEMED,

O KIND FATHER.”

Amen !

CHAPTER X.

Conclusion.

We have thus given a brief account of the Five Purificatory Acts which make a man absolutely perfect and wise, or *Paramaikanti* परमेकान्ती as he is usually called. “ज्ञानौतु परमेकान्ती” i.e. the two words *Jnani* (ज्ञानौ) and *Paramaikanti* (परमेकान्ती) are synonymous.

The living saints of Southern India teach us how to be initiated into the doctrines that tend to purify us at once and unite us with God.

The *Pancha Samskara Deeksha* (पञ्चमंस्कार दीक्षा) is meant only for those who are altogether impatient of being united with God in this life. It enables a man to seek the company of the dearest servants of God on earth living in these days, who are within the reach of all men at all times in all places. If a man be so blessed by God as to become the favourite of His dearest servants on earth, the living saints of the day, the mission of his life is fulfilled.

Southern India is the seat of the living saints of these days. The chief of them may be mentioned here for the sake of reference at least.

1. His Holiness Srimad Paramhansetyadi &c. Appan Govinda Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami, who occupies the chair of His Holiness the Late Embar Jeeyar Swami, Or Madhúr-mangal-Jeeyar Swami, at Sriperumbudur (twenty-five miles to the west of Madras) in the District of Chinglepet.

2. Vidvan Nrisinhachari Swami (विद्वान् नृसिंहाचारौ स्वामी), the learned Principal of the Sanskrit College at Sriperumbudur.

3. His Most Exalted Holiness Koil Kandádai Kumára Singarácháriar Swami of Singáperumál Koil in the District of Chinglepet, Madras. He is the great Dumb Sage who is the representative of the family of Vádhool-Varadáryya, a lineal descendant of Dasarathi Swami, the renowned saint and sage who was the nephew of the great Ramanuja Swami.

4. The younger brother of the above-mentioned Dumb Sage is the great Mudli Andán Swami who heads the lists of saints at Melkote in Mysore.

5. His Holiness the great Totadri Swami at Naguneru in the District of Tinneveli in the Madras Presidency.

6. The great Annan Swami at Sri Rangam, (Trichinopoly in Madras).

7. The great Parásara Bhattar Swami at Sri Rangam.

8. The great Veda Vyasa Bhattara Swami of Sri Rangam.

9. His Holiness Srimad &c. Ranga Narayana Jeeyar Swami at Sri Rangam.

10. His Holiness Srimad &c. Gomatha Jeeyar Swami at Sriperumbudur.

11. His Holiness the Jeeyar Swami living at the Back Gate of the temple of Varada Rája Bhagavana at Kanchi or Conjeeveram.

12. His Holiness the three Jeeyar Swami at Alvár Tirunagari in the District of Tinneveli.

13. His Holiness the great Jeeyar Swami at Tirukkuranguri or Kuranganagari in the District of Tinneveli.

14. His Holiness the great Jeeyar Swami at Sri Villuputtur, [twenty-five miles from the Railway Station Satur, South Madras Railway.]

15. The great Sirupillur Swami at the same place, (i. e. at Sri Villuputtur)

16. The Saints of Tirukkanpuri, a Divya Desa or Holy place, some fifteen miles off the Railway Station Ninnelum (South Madras Railway).

17. The Saints at Madhur-mangala, some twelve miles from Sriperumbudur.

18. The Saints at the sacred Hills of Venkatadri Varanadri, Vanagiri, Yadavadri, Svetadri, Ghatikachalam, Totadri, Neeladri.

19. And finally those living at all the one hundred and eight Divyadesas in the whole of India. (Notably the saints of Srimushnam, Chidambaram, Shiyali, Parakala Tirunagari, Tiru Nangur in the District of Tanjore, Triplicane in Madras, Combakonam, Melkote in Mysore). Under this head we have

counted the saints of Northern India also. The fact is that there are ninety-seven Divyadesas (दिव्यदेशाः) or Holy Places in Southern India, and only eleven Holy Places in Northern India. That part of India which lies north of the Vindhya Hills is here called Northern India and the part which lies south of the Vindhya Hills is called the Southern India.

Of all these Holy places, Sriperumbudur (Sanskrit name श्रीभूतपुरो) heads the list. It is the birthplace of the great Ramanuja Swami and it is the principal seat of learning at present in southern India. The greatest of the saints of the day live in this Holy place. His Holiness Appan Govinda Ramunuja Jeeyar Swami is the most distinguished Saint of Southern India in these days. If we have the good fortune of enjoying his blessed company even for a very short time, we are sure to turn a new page in the history of our lives. India is proud of this godly man. He is regarded as one of the most precious jewels of Southern India, and, his godly nature and godly character have endeared him to all the good men of Southern India.

Our last act even as our first act is to recount the glories of the Saints and Sages of the Lord's devotees. Thus

“लक्ष्मीनाथ समारम्भा नाथयामुनमध्यमाम् ।

अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्ता वन्दे गुरुपरम्पराम् ॥”

In other words, we should bow down before all who are in the chain of our *Gurus* or spiritual pre-

ceptors ; we should begin with singing the glories of the Lord of Lakshmi (the benign mother of all).

In the middle we are to sing the glories of the Divine sages Natha-muni and the Blessed Yamuna-Muni.

Finally we should for ever sing the glories of our immediate Saviour, our own blessed spiritual preceptor.

Thus, we should for ever sing the glories of all our spiritual guides in succession, *viz.*, His Holiness the Late

1. **कुमार वैकटाचार्यस्वामी**—Kumára Venkátacháryya Swami, whose divine attributes are sung in the following lines. Thus,

श्रीवैकटार्यतनयं श्रीलादिगुणसागरं ।

वाधूलार्णव पूर्णेन्दुं श्रीशैलार्यमहं भजे ॥

His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami was the spiritual preceptor of the Late Ranga-charyya Swami of Govardhana Giri (Brindabana—Muttra). Almost all the living saints of southern India are disciples of His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami, whose glories are for ever being chanted in the verse quoted above.

2. We then come to his holy preceptor, the great Vadhool Venkataryya Swami (वाधूलवैकटार्यस्वामी) whose glories are sung in the following sloka :—

वाधूलवैकटंगुरुत्तमपुचरत्नं ।

श्रीशैल लक्षणसुनीन्द्रदयकपाचं ॥

वेदान्तयुग्मविशदोकरण प्रवीणं ।

श्रीवैकटार्यं गुरुशिखरमाश्रयामः ॥

From the above verse it will appear that the Great Venkataryya Swami was well versed in both the Vedantas viz. (1) Sanskrit Vedanta and (2) Tamil Vedanta. The epithet वेदान्तयुग्मविशदोकरणप्रवीण signifies that he could give a lucid exposition of both the Vedantas.

3. We then come to his Holy Preceptor Venkata Guru Swami, whose excellent virtues are thus described:—

श्रीमद् वधूलकुल वारिधिपूर्णचन्द्रं ।

श्रीश्रीनिवासयतिपाद सरोजभृङ्गं ॥

श्रीवैकटार्यतनयं विनयोज्वलन्तं ।

श्रीवैकटार्यं गुरुशिखरमाश्रयामः ॥

4. Then comes his venerable Preceptor Sri Venkataryya Swami, whose divine virtues are sung as below :—

श्रीवाधूलकुलप्रदीप महित श्रीवैकटार्यात्मजं ।

श्रीशंवासवरप्रदार्यतनयं श्रीवैकटार्यात्मजं ॥

तत्पाद प्रवणं रमानिधि मुने सम्प्राप्तबोधोदयं ।

श्रीशंवासवरप्रदार्यतनयं सेवेनिशं श्रीनिधिम् ॥

5. Next we come to his Acháryya, who is thus described :—

श्रीमद्वधूलकुलदेशिक वंशजातं ।

श्रीश्रीनिवास वरदार्यं गुरोः स्वपुत्रं ॥

श्रीवासरम्यवरयोगि कृपासबोधं ।

श्रीवैकटार्यं गुरुशिखरमाश्रयामः ॥

6. We then come to his adorable Preceptor Sriman Natártihara Desika Swami, whose virtues are sung in the following lines. Thus,

श्रीमद्वधूलकुल वेंकटसूरिष्वशैलं,
श्रीशोनिवास वरदार्यगुरोस्तनूजं ।
तत्पादयुग्मगणं तदुपासितारं,
श्रीमन्नतार्त्तिहर देशिकमाश्रयामः ॥

7. We next come to his worthy Preceptor the Great Srinivása Varada Guru, whose glories are sung thus :—

वाधूलवेंकटाचार्यतनयं तत्पादाश्रयं ।
तदवामधिगं वन्दे श्रीवास वरदं गुरुम् ॥

8. We then come to his venerable Guru, the All-perfect Sri Venkatáyya Swami, whose divine virtues are sung thus :—

श्रीमद्वधूलकुलवारिधिपूर्णचन्द्रं,
श्रीवाससूरितनयं तदवामबोधं ।
श्रीवेंकटार्यपदपंकज राजहंसं,
श्रीवेंकटार्यमनवद्यगुणं भजामि ॥

9. Then comes his Preceptor the Holy Srinivasa Guru who was master of both the Vedantas,

वाधूल वेंकटाचार्य सूनुं तत्पाद संश्रयं ।
श्रीनिवास गुरुं वन्दे वेदान्तद्वय देशिकं ॥

10. Next we come to his Preceptor Venkata Desika Swami,

वाधूल श्रीनिवासायैतनयं विनयोज्वलम् ।
वरदार्य कृपापात्रं वन्दे वेंकट देशिकम् ॥

11. Next comes his Acharyya the venerable Varadaryya Swami,

वाधूल श्रीनिवासाय पदपङ्कज षट्पदम् ।

वरदार्यमहं वन्दे वेकटाचार्य नन्दनम् ॥

12. Then we come to his Preceptor Srinivasa Acharyya who was full of all the excellent attributes which mark a spiritual guide with a heart overflowing with affection for his pupils. Thus,

वात्सल्यादि गुणावासं वाधूलकुलभूषणं ।

वेकटार्य कृपापात्रं श्रीनिवासगुरुं भजे ॥

In the above chain of Acharyyas or Spiritual Preceptors we have counted in regular succession twelve saints who are all descended directly from the line of

13. Sri Venkata Guru who was the favourite disciple of the Great Vadhoola Varadacharyya Swami or Koel Annan Swami as he is called in Tamil. Thus.

वाधूलवरदाचार्य कृपापूर्ण मनोरथं ।

श्रीवेकट गुरुं वन्दे शीलादिगुणसागरम् ॥

14. We now arrive at dry land. We come to Vadhoola Varadácharyya, the great Saint of Southern India who claims the bulk of the Sri Vaishnavas as his own dear disciples by virtue of his descent from the Great Dasarathi Swami who was the dearest disciple of Sri Ramanuja Swami—Kooras Swami (कूरेशस्वामी excepted) and who had so deep and sincere a reverence for his venerable preceptor, Ramanuja Swami, that he is symbolically represented to be the Holy Feet of the Saviour Rámánuja. The

Saint Vadhoola Varadácháryya Swami was very dear to His Holiness the All-blessed Ramanuja Jeeyar Swami of the Sacred Mount Vánádri or Totadri (*Vána-má-malai—Jeeyar Tiruvadi—Halai—Saranam*—is the Tamil prayer of the Sri Vaishnavas of the world). Thus,

श्रीमद् वाणमहाशैल रामानुजमुनिप्रियम् ।

वाधूल वरदाचार्यं वन्दे वात्सल्यसागरम् ॥

रम्यजामातृयोगीन्द्र पादपङ्केरुहाश्रयं ।

वरदार्यमहं वन्दे वाधूलकुलभूषणम् ॥

15. We then come to the dearest disciple of the great Vara-Vara-muni Swami, viz His Holiness the All-blessed Vánádri Rámanuja Jeeyar Swami who occupies one of the eight Chairs of Learning created by Vara-Vara-muni Swami to propagate the principles of the followers of the Saviour Ramanuja, who uphold the doctrines inculcated by the Visistadvaita Theory of the Vedanta Philosophy. His divine virtues are sung in the following words :—

रम्यजामातृ योगीन्द्र पादरेखामयं सदा ।

तदायत्तात्मसत्तादि रामानुजमुनिं भजे ॥

16. We now come to his Preceptor सौम्यजामातृयोगीन्द्र (Soumya-Jamatri-Yogeendra) or Vara-Vara-Muni Swami (वरवरमुनि स्वामी) whose Tamil name is Mandaval-ma-muni (मण्डवाल-मा-मुनि) who is only another Image of the Saviour Ramanuja Swami. His divine glories are sung in the following memorable lines :—

श्रीशैलेश दयापात्रं धीभक्त्यादि गुणार्णवं ।

यतीन्द्रप्रवणं वन्दे रम्यजामातरं मुनिम् ॥

श्रीमते रम्यजामाह सुनीन्द्राय महात्मने ।

श्रीरंगवासिने भूयात् नित्य श्रीर्नित्यमंगलम् ॥

17. We then come to his Holy Preceptor Sri Saila-Natharyya Swami (श्रीशैलनाथार्य स्वामी). His praises are thus sung by his devotees :—

नमः श्रीशैलनाथाय कुन्तीनगर जन्मने ।

प्रसादलब्धपरमप्राप्यकैर्कर्यशालिने ॥

18. We now come to his venerable preceptor the great Lokacharyya Swami or Loka-Desika-Swami,

लोकाचार्याय गुरवे कृष्णपादस्य सूत्रवे ।

संसारभोगिसन्दष्ट जीव जीवतवे नमः ॥

Loka Desika Swami is here described as 'gifted with the miraculous power of reanimating those that are stung to death by the serpent-shaped Devil.' He can save those that yield to the temptations of flesh and blood.

19. We then come to his preceptor Sri Krishna-páda Swami, whose virtues are sung in the following verse :—

श्रीकृष्णपाद पादाब्जे नमामि शिरसा सदा ।

यत् प्रसाद प्रभावेन सर्वसिद्धिरभूत्तमम् ॥

20. We next come to his Holy Preceptor, the Blessed Saint Kali-Vairi Dás Swámi (कलिवैरिदास स्वामी) whose divine virtues are sung as below :—

वेदान्तवेद्यामृतवारिराशि वेदार्थसारामृतपूरमग्रम् ।

आदाय वर्षतमहं प्रपद्ये कारुण्यपूर्णं कलिवैरिदासम् ॥

21. His Preceptor was Vedánti Swami or Nan-Jeeyar Swami as he is called by his Tamil name, who is described thus :—

नमो वेदान्तवेद्याय जगन्मंगल हेतवे ।

यस्य वागमृतासारपूरितं भूवनत्रयम् ॥

This Nan Jeeyar Swami was the greatest learned man of his time in India. His expositions of the secrets of the Vedanta Philosophy are sweet as nectar and they have gained for him an undying reputation in the three worlds.

22. We then come to his All-blessed Preceptor the great Sri Parásara Bhattáryya (श्रीपराशर भट्टार्य्य) more commonly known to the Sri Vaishnavas by his Holy epithet Sri Bhattáraka Swami (श्रीभट्टारक स्वामी) who occupied the chair of the Saviour Rámánuja Swami after His Holiness Govindáryya Swami. He was brought up and educated by the Great Rámánuja Swami himself and he was the son of the All-blessed Koores Swami (कूरेश्वरस्वामी). He and Veda-Vyása-Bhattar (वेदव्यास भट्टर) were twin brothers. It is said that Ramanuja Swami had felt that he could by no means repay “the debt immense of endless gratitude” which he owed to the literary leviathans, the great Parasara Muni (पराशरमुनि)—the well-known author of the Vishnu Purana (विष्णुपुराण) and Veda Vyasa, the celebrated author of the Vedanta Sutras, for the services they had rendered to the propagation of the Sri Vaishnava doctrines. The saint Yámunacharyya Swami, the Paramacharyya परमाचार्य्य or Grand-Preceptor of Sri Ramanuja Swami in his

excellent prayer *Almandár* had thus expressed his deep sense of gratitude to the great sage Parasara;—

“तत्त्वेन यच्चिदचिदीरश्चतत्स्वभाव ।

भोगापवर्गं तदुपायं गतीरुदारः ॥

सन्दर्श्यच्चिरमिमीत पुराणरत्नं ।

तस्मै नमो मुनिवराय पराशराय ॥”

i.e. I bow down to the great sage Parasara who in his all-excellent Purana has given us a beautiful solution of the difficult problems of life by explaining clearly the essence of the three entities, चित् (*chit*), अचित् (*Achit*) and ईश्वर (*Ishvara*), in other words, Individual souls or Finite being, Infinite Being and Achit or Maya (माया) which is the inseparable gulf that separates the finite creatures and the Infinite Being, who has also explained the *summum bonum* of life, the means of attaining salvation and its end.

The sage Parasara is thus regarded as the pioneer of the Visistadvaita Theory as expounded by the predecessors as well as followers of Ramanuja. Veda Vyasa the author of the original Vedanta Sutras is also regarded as a great benefactor and is treated with greatest respect by the predecessors of Ramanuja. Accordingly Ramanuja had taken a solemn vow that he would name some of his dearest disciples after these two great benefactors of the Sri Vaishnavas to show his deep sense of gratitude to them. And when by the blessing of God the twin sons of Kooras Swami were born, the Saviour Rama Swami named the first as Sri Parasara Bhattar and second as Veda

Vyasa Bhattar. It is said that Ramanuja had taken a special care of the first whose future greatness was clearly foreshadowed in his very childhood. The glories of Sri Parasara Bhattariya (श्रीपराशरभट्टार्य) are sung to this day in the following words :—

श्रीपराशर भट्टार्यः श्रीरंगेश पुरोहितः ।

श्रीवत्साक सुतः श्रीमान् श्रेयसे मेऽस्तु भूयसे ॥

23. We then come to his preceptor Govindariya (गोविन्दार्य) Swami who was a cousin of the great Ramanuja Swami (i.e. the son of his mother's sister). He is said to be the shadow as it were of the Holy Feet of the Saviour Ramaunja Swami. Thus,

रामानुजपदच्छाया गोविन्दाङ्गानपायिनौ ।

तदायतस्वरूपासा जीयान्मदु विश्वमखली ॥

24. We next come to Koores Swami (कूरेशस्वामी) the dearest disciple of Ramanuja Swami. His memorable sayings shine as a precious and holy necklace round the neck of the goddess of the Three Vedas. His surname was Sri Vatsa-Chinha-Misra, (श्रीवत्सचिह्न मिश्र)

श्रीवत्सचिह्न मिश्रेभ्यो नम उक्ति मधौमहि ।

यदुक्तय स्रयीकण्ठे यान्ति मंगलसूत्रताम् ॥

24. Then, we come to the All-blessed Dasarathi Swami (दाशरथिस्वामी) who was the nephew (sister's son) of the Saviour Ramanuja Swami and who is regarded as the Holy Feet of the Saviour. Thus

पादुके यतिराजस्य कथयन्ति यदाख्यया ।

तस्म दाशरथेः पादौ शिरसा धारयाम्यहम् ॥

26. We next come to the Saviour himself, the great Ramanuja Swami, whose love for the lotus-like Holy Feet of God was so great that he regarded all other things as no better than a straw and who was literally a great ocean of kindness. Thus,

यो नित्यमच्युत पदाम्बुजयुग्मरुक्म ।
 व्यामोहतस्तदितराणि तृणाय मेने ॥
 ऽस्मद्गुरोर्भगवतोस्य दयैकसिन्धो ।
 रामानुजस्य चरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

27. We then come to the preceptor of Rámánuja Swami, namely, Mahá Purna Swami (महापूर्ण स्वामी), who is described thus :—

कमलापति कल्याण गुणामृत निषेवया ।
 पूर्णकामाय सततं पूर्णाय महते नमः ॥

28. Next we come to his preceptor the All-blessed Yámunácháryya Swami (यामुनाचार्य स्वामी) whose memory is thus preserved,

यत्पादाश्वोरुहध्यान विध्वस्ताशेषकल्मषः ।
 वस्तुतामुप्रयातोहं यामुनेयं नमामि तम् ॥

29. His preceptor Sri Ráma Misra Swami (श्रीराममिश्र स्वामी) is described in the following terms :—

अयन्नतो यामुनमात्मदासमलर्कपत्रार्पणनिष्क्रयेन ।
 यः क्रीतवानास्थितं यौवराज्यं नमामि तं राम ममेय सत्त्वम् ॥

30. His preceptor again Sri Pundarikáksha (श्रीपुण्डरीकाक्ष) Swami is described thus :—

नमः पङ्कजनेत्राय नाथ श्रीपादपङ्कजे ।
 न्यस्तसर्वभरायास्तत् कुलनाथाय धीमते ॥

31. We then come to his preceptor Sriman Náthmuni (श्रीमन्नाथमुनि) who was an Astānga Yogi (अष्टाङ्गयोगी) and whose wisdom, reverence, piety and other inconceivable divine virtues are compared to an unfathomable ocean. Thus

नमोऽचिन्त्याङ्गतात्किष्ट ज्ञानवैराग्य राशये ।

नाथाय मुनयेऽगाध भगवद्भक्तिसिन्धवे ॥

32. His venerable preceptor Srimán Sathakopa Swami (श्रीमान् शठकोप स्वामी) comes next whose sacred memory is thus cherished :—

मातापिता युवतयस्तनया विभूति ।

स्सर्वं यदेव नियमेन मदन्वयानाम् ॥

आद्यस्य नः कुलपतेर्वकुलाभिरामं ।

श्रीमत्तदंघ्रियुगलं प्रणमामि मूर्ध्ना ॥

33. Then comes his preceptor the divine Visvak Sena Swámi (श्रीमाम् विश्वक्सेन स्वामी) who is described thus :—

श्रीरंगचन्द्रमसमिन्दिरयाविहर्तुं ।

विन्द्यस्य विश्वचिदचिन्नयनाधिकारं ॥

यो निर्वहत्यनिशमंगुलिसुद्रययैव ।

सेनान्धमन्यविमुखास्तमशिश्रयामः ।

34. His preceptor is the Divine Mother Sri Rānga Náyaki (श्रीरंगनायकी) Herself. Her divine glories are chanted in the following verse :—

नमः श्रीरंगनायक्यै यद्भूविश्रम मेदतः ।

इंशेशितब्ध वैद्यस्य निम्नोन्नतमिदं जगत् ॥

35. Her Preceptor is God Himself who is worshipped at Sri Rangam (Trichinopoli) as Sri Ranganatha lying down on the lap of the Divine Serpent-shaped Ananta Deva, whose divine glories are chanted in the following glowing terms :—

श्रीस्तनाभरणं तेजः श्रीरंगेशयमाश्रये ।

चिन्तामणि मिवोद्भान्त सुत्संगेऽनन्तभोगिनः ॥

Thus we have sung the divine glories of all the Acharyyas or Spiritual Preceptors from our own preceptor up to God himself. God is the Original Preceptor. For, the Vedas describe him in that light. Cp. “आचार्यं मां विजानीयात्” i.e., “know me to be the Original Acharyya or Spiritual Preceptor.”

Here, in recounting the glories of all the spiritual preceptors we have proceeded in the ascending order. We should now sing their Divine names once more in the descending order. We descend from God down to our own blessed spiritual preceptor. Thus, then, we begin with,

1. God in his worshipable Divine manifestation at Sri Rangam (Trichinopoli) who is known to us by His Divine name Sri Ranga Nátha (श्रीरंगनाथ). Then comes

2. The Divine Mother herself, known to us as Sri Ranga Náiyaki (श्रीरंगनायकी).

3. Sri Visvak Sena Bhagavána (श्रीविष्णुसेन भगवान्) is the third spiritual preceptor.

4 The Fourth spiritual preceptor is the all-blessed Sathakopa Swami (श्रीमान् सठकोप स्वामी)

5. The fifth in the chain of *Guru Paramparā* (गुरुपरम्परा) is Sriman Nāthamuni (श्रीमन्नाथमुनि).

6. The sixth in succession is Sri Pundarikāksha Swami (श्रीपुण्डरीकाक्ष स्वामी).

7. The seventh is Sri Rāma Misra Swami (श्रीराममिश्र स्वामी).

8. The eighth in the chain is the great Yāmunāchāryya Swami (यामुनाचार्यस्वामी).

9. The ninth is Mahāpurna Swami (श्रीमहापूर्ण स्वामी).

10. The tenth Guru or the Saviour of the world is the Great Rāmānuja Swami (श्रीरामानुजस्वामी). He is very aptly said to be the Saviour inasmuch as He is the Ideal Servant of God. And, no one would hesitate to accept the Ideal Servant of God as his spiritual preceptor, or, Saviour. He is otherwise called as "Lakshmanāryyo Jagad-Guruh (लक्ष्मणार्यो जगद्गुरुः)"

11. His dear disciple Dāsarathi Swami (दाशरथी स्वामी) is the eleventh in the chain of spiritual preceptors.

12. The dearest disciple of Rāmānuja, Srimān Koores Swami (श्रीमान् कूरेश स्वामी), is twelfth in the chain.

• 13. Next is Govindāryya Swami (गोविन्दार्य स्वामी):

14. Sri Parāsara Bhattāryya (श्रीपराशर भट्टार्य) stands fourteenth in the chain. But, in reality, he stands next to Rāmānuja himself, in the opinion of all the saints and sages of southern India.

15. Vedanti Swami (वेदान्तीस्वामी) or Nan Jeeyar Swami, as he is called in Tamil, stands next.

16. The next in the chain is Kali-Vairi Dasa Swami (कलिवैरिदास स्वामी).

17. Then comes Sri Krishnapada Swami (श्रीकृष्णपाद स्वामी).

18. Lokacharyya Swami (लोकाचार्यस्वामी) stands next.

19. Sri Saila nath Swami (श्रीशैलनाथस्वामी) follows him.

20. The great Vara-Vara-Muni-Swami (वरवरमुनि स्वामी) who is only another Image of the Saviour Ramanuja, comes next.

21. Vanadri Ramanuja Jeeyar (वाणाद्रिरामानुजजीयर)

22. Vadhoola Varadacharyya (वाधूलवरदाचार्य).

23-35. Then there are thirteen spiritual preceptors in succession who all go by the sacred name Sri Venkata Guru (श्रीवेंकटगुरु). The word *Venkata* means *destroyer of sins* (वें=पापं, कटति=हरति, इति वेंकटः). The last of the Venkata Gurus is His Holiness the Late Kumara Venkatacharyya Swami who claims the majority of the Sri Vaishnavas to be his own disciples. He has two sons left to him, namely :

(1) The Great Dumb Sage Koel Kandadai Kumara Singarchariar Swami (कोएलकन्दाडै कुमार सिंगराचार्यस्वामी) who dwells in the holy village Singaperumal Koel in the district of Chingleput in the Madras Presidency.

(2) Mudli Andan Swami (मुदलि आण्डान् स्वामी).

This Tamil name when translated into Sanskrit would stand as (श्रीदाशरथिस्वामी) who now adorns the presence of Sampat Kumara Bhagavana or the Holy God of Yadavadri (यादवाद्रि) i.e. Melkote in Mysore.

May all those that stand in the chain of our Spiritual preceptors ((गुरुपरम्परा) prosper for ever. Amen !

